UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE INVENTED PERSONAGES IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

BELLE SEDDON MATHESON

A THESIS

IN ENGLISH

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA
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TO
MY FATHER

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PREFACE

In the preparation of this dissertation, a study has been made of three classes of material: the plays of Shakespeare; the specific sources of them, as suggested in Hazlitt's edition of Collier's *Shakespeare's Library*, Gollancz's *Shakespeare Classics*, and elsewhere; and finally, certain works, such as the plays of Marlowe and Lyly, which, it is generally accepted, exerted an indirect influence on some of Shakespeare's characterizations. It has been necessary at times also to consult the critical works of some writers on the history of the Elizabethan drama and Shakespeare's place therein; but, in the main, an effort has been made to base all opinions, classifications, and illustrations made in the following pages upon a comparison of Shakespeare's plays with the sources which have been suggested for them and generally accepted. I am indebted for valuable assistance to the librarians of the University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr College, and Haverford College. My thanks are due also to the authorities of the Bodleian Library in Oxford who permitted me to have access to their works on Shakespeare. To Doctor F. E. Schelling, who suggested this subject to me, I wish to express my deep gratitude and obligation for his great help in the way of advice and suggestion.

INTRODUCTION

The genius of Shakespeare has been considered in many aspects. Shakespeare, the dramatist; Shakespeare, the poet; Shakespeare, the actor; Shakespeare, the philosopher of life; Shakespeare, the portrayer of character: all of these subjects and many more have furnished material for discussion and for controversy. It is the purpose of this dissertation to present Shakespeare, the inventor of personages. As "to invent" is by definition "to produce for the first time," our discussion will be concerned with those personages in Shakespeare's plays who are the dramatist's original creations, as distinguished from those whom he took over all but wholly or in part from his authorities.

There arise in connection with this topic various considerations which will form the bases for discussion in the several chapters. Our first task is an explanation in some detail of the term "invented" when used in relation to the personages in Shakespeare's plays. This will, of necessity, include a brief discussion of the sources of the plays before proceeding with an explanation of the various degrees and types of invention which are distinguishable after a study of the plays and their sources.

A second point is concerned with Shakespeare's use of character invention when he is portraying the various strata of society. An effort will be made to determine with which group or groups Shakespeare is most inventive. In the third place, there will be indicated a classification of the personages in Shakespeare's plays according to their part in the structure of the play; and a discussion of the dramatist's use of invention with the various classes will follow. Fourthly, an effort will be made to determine whether or not Shakespeare became more inventive in regard to his characters as he progressed in age and dramatic experience and whether Shakespeare is most inventive in his tragedies, or in his comedies, or in his chronicle plays.

There are also certain minor questions which will be brought up for brief discussion. In the first place, does Shakespeare show most power of invention when his sources are chronicles, or when they are biographies, or when they are romances, or when they are plays? Again, to what degree, if any, did the personnel of Shakespeare's company of actors affect the personages which

he invented? Next, what are the personal characteristics of Shakespeare which may have had some influence on the personages which he has invented? Again, is Shakespeare more inventive in characterization than he is in the plots of his plays? Is Shakespeare inventive in the dialogue and language of his personages? And finally, are Shakespeare's invented characters his greatest creations?

These questions, together with such answers as may be formulated, will constitute the subject matter of the discussion in this dissertation.

I

The Term "Invented" as Applied to the Personages in Shakespeare's Plays

A familiar paradox affirms that Shakespeare is alike the most original and the least original of all writers. And this statement is true particularly in regard to characterization, as the great dramatist took the majority of his personages from the sources of his plays, while, at the same time, he often endowed them with a new personality and individuality, and also created entirely new characters as he saw fit.

According to a custom prevalent in his age, Shakespeare borrowed the plots of most of his plays from various sources. He might have said as did Molière, "*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve.*" In this respect Shakespeare may be termed an unoriginal writer. But, on the other hand, with unfailing dramatic and artistic instinct, he chose from his sources that which was best in plot and characterization and used it in his own works. Thus Shakespeare invented when necessary and only when necessary.

If the source was satisfactory in regard to plot and character portrayal, then Shakespeare invented little, as in the case of *Antony and Cleopatra;* if, on the other hand, the original supplied merely an outline of action, as in the case of the source of *Macbeth*, he filled in the plot, changed it if necessary, and elaborated the characters or put in new ones to supplement those in the source.

Shakespeare, in thirty-four of the thirty-seven plays generally attributed to him, has relied on some source either for suggestion or for the entire plot. No satisfactory source has been discovered for *Love's Labor's Lost*, or for *The Tempest*, or for the combined stories of *Midsummer Night's Dream;* but for the other plays, some source or sources have been found to which Shakespeare is more or less indebted.

These sources fall into two categories: first, the direct or specific sources to which Shakespeare turned for the plots of his

plays, and secondly, the indirect or general sources which, as a rule, influenced Shakespeare without his being aware of it. To the first group belong such sources as Holinshed's *Chronicles* or Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*; to the second group belong the works of Christopher Marlowe or of John Lyly which influenced the type of character portrayed by Shakespeare rather than any specific personage. This latter kind of source influenced Shakespeare only in the early stages of his career as a dramatist when he was to some extent affected in his writings by the work of other dramatists. The first type of source, on the other hand, Shakespeare used till the close of his career.

These sources are not all found in any one type of literature, or in the works of any one author or period. They cover a wide range and a broad scope, and are illustrative of Shakespeare's ability to choose the dramatic wherever he found it. Our first consideration will be those sources to which Shakespeare turned for the plots of his plays, the direct or specific sources to which he owed the suggestions for many of his personages, and even the full portrayals of some of them.

Shakespeare used various types of sources of this kind. Foremost among these are certain popular chronicles, mainly Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, which served him as either main or secondary source for his ten English chronicle plays and for *Macbeth* and *King Lear*. Often Shakespeare used other works in combination with the chronicles, as in the case of *King Henry V* when an old play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, supplements Holinshed. The chronicles are, as a rule, undramatic and void of much interest; they are a bare record of events, and it was necessary for Shakespeare to elaborate the characters which he found, and to invent others, as well as to develop a dramatic plot from the long account of the chronicles. Shakespeare used the splendid biographies in North's translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* as sources for his Roman dramas; in the case of these plays, the original needed little change or elaboration in plot or in characterization, as it is a masterpiece of literature. Shakespeare also at times used older plays as the main sources for his dramas; as for example, when he worked over the old play, *The True Chronicle History of King*

Leir, into his tragedy of *King Lear*, or when he used Plautus' *Menaechmi* as source for *The Comedy of Errors*. These older plays, in some cases, were followed very closely by Shakespeare; and, in other cases, they merely furnish slight hints to the dramatist. Shakespeare drew upon romances for some of his plays: English tales by his contemporaries for *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale;* Italian romances, often translated into English, for *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Cymbeline*, and other plays. The English romances are very satisfactory sources, and we find Shakespeare elaborating characters more often than inventing or changing them; on the other hand, the dramatist reconstructed almost entirely the Italian romances as he made them into dramas; in general, he took only the original situation and the main characters, and even then he changed and elaborated and invented when necessary. Earlier English poetry served as source, either in whole or in part, for several plays. Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* influenced Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, and Gower's *De Confessio Amantis*, *Pericles*.

There are, besides these various sources which Shakespeare drew upon for his plots and characters, many minor sources as well—sources from which the great dramatist may have taken only one personage, or even only some of the actions of one personage; or he may have taken several characters and made them serve as figures in a sub-plot.

History, biography, play, romance, poem—all of these served Shakespeare as material. He is indeed a "great architect who, gifted with a truly divine gift, gave the materials their beautiful shape."[1]

There are also certain sources which exert a general influence on Shakespeare's characters. Instead of being directly responsible for any of the figures in the plays, they rather influence the type of character portrayed. As a rule, they also influence the type of plot and the style and language of the plays.

This group of sources contains the work of some of Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries in the field of drama. Outstanding in this group are the plays of Christopher Marlowe.

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[1] H. R. D. Anders, *Shakespeare's Books*, p. xvi.

There is a strong reminder of Marlowe's work in many of the early plays of Shakespeare—reminders as regards structure, style, metre, type of plot, and characterization. Marlowe's *Edward II* was a constant model, especially in respect to structure and plot, for Shakespeare's histories; his tragic style, eloquent and strong, influenced his great contemporary; and his strongly individualistic and boldly relieved characters have left a marked impression on Shakespeare. Examples of this last are many: the aspiring figures of the type of Tamburlaine are prototypes of York in *King Henry VI*, of Richard III, of Macbeth; the weak kings like Edward are Richard II's and Henry VI's models; the evil villain Barabas of *The Jew of Malta* is not unlike Shylock. Shakespeare was influenced by Marlowe a great deal in his early works, and there are reflections of the latter's works even in Shakespeare's more finished dramas.

The work of Robert Greene left both a direct and an indirect influence on Shakespeare. The earlier dramatist's union of comedy and tragedy, his blending of different stories into one play, his splendid portrayals of women especially, all are reflected in the pages of Shakespeare.

John Lyly's work likewise influenced Shakespeare. Many of the characters in *Love's Labor's Lost* are similar in type to some of Lyly's creations. Launce and Speed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* are not unlike two servants in Lyly's *Midas*. The euphuistic style so prevalent in Lyly's works is found occasionally reflected, though perhaps not technically imitated, in Shakespeare's plays. There are burlesques of it also.

There is some influence of Thomas Kyd's works felt in *Titus Andronicus;* and the ghosts in Shakespeare's dramas may owe something to those in Kyd's plays; for example, to the ghost of Andrea in *The Spanish Tragedy*. Of such later writers as Beaumont and Fletcher, it seems more probable that Shakespeare influenced them, than that they may have suggested theme and type of character to Shakespeare. Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, a sincere and courageous book which has for its purpose the disproval of the existence of witches, was probably known by Shakespeare, and its discussions of the subject may have influenced some of his supernatural beings. Other Eliza-

bethan works of folk and fairy lore may also have been known by him.

There are other writings to which Shakespeare alluded in his plays, but which have not influenced the characters at all. An exhaustive list of the many works which left their mark on Shakespeare would be impossible. His mind was very impressionable, and it retained those things which the dramatist read and heard, and, as a result, there are in his works echoes of many writers whose literary productions had become a part of his mind.

After any discussion of the sources of Shakespeare's plays, however cursory that discussion may be, it is necessary to remind ourselves that, in spite of the many sources, there is much that is original with Shakespeare, much more, in regard to characterization especially, than he took from his sources.

The question of Shakespeare's method of using these sources now arises. The answer is a simple one—if the sources were adequate, he invented little; if they were inadequate, he invented enough to make a good play. Bagehot has noted these three facts in regard to Shakespeare's power of choosing what to use in his sources: in the first place, the dramatist takes the essentials in plot and character from his source; in the next place, he just as surely discards the non-essentials even if these may be interesting in themselves; and finally, he takes the incidents which do not fall into either of the above categories, and uses them if they do not hurt his play dramatically. A word may be said at this point on Shakespeare's unerring instinct for the dramatic; he knew what a play needed to make it popular, and if he did not find this in his source, he invented it himself, so that romance, poem, history, or inferior play, would become by his touch, a great drama; with economy of stroke, he would create a true picture of life, an artistic drama, an original achievement.

Shakespeare knew that the battle was half over if he took a plot which was familiar to his audience, but he also knew that he must improve upon that plot, must infuse some new beauty into it, must create and develop characters if he was to be successful. And this he does in every case; by characterization, incident, poetry, he developed his originals, so that the result

was great drama. We need hardly add that the fact that Shakespeare used sources for his plays does not detract from his fame as a dramatic poet. The essential question is not how much he has appropriated, but what use he has made of that which he has appropriated. Generally speaking, Shakespeare seizes the gist of the plot of his source, and then develops his drama by organizing his material in such a way that the *dénouement* is due to the characterization and incidents.

Illustrative of Shakespeare's method of using a source as discussed above is the case of *King Lear.* Shakespeare read the older play, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir,* and then took it for his own use. He recognized the worth of the play, and recognized also that it lacked certain necessary qualities of drama. He takes his major plot from the old play, but with the keen eye of the great dramatist he discards the inappropriate happy ending and makes it bitter and cruel tragedy—the only possible ending if essential truth is followed. He, likewise, intensifies the tragic bitterness of the possession of thankless children by adding a sub-plot which is similar in theme. And this he gets from another source. He is taking his own where he finds it. He likewise makes great and unforgettable personages from the weak, and, in some cases, inconsistent ones in the source, or he elaborates mere suggestions, or invents entirely as in the case of the Fool, one of Shakespeare's greatest creations.

Shakespeare, then, does not invent characters without a reason; his purposes for so doing in general are as follows: first, to elaborate when a source is inadequate or needs change in order to carry out his ideas; secondly, to enhance the dramatic worth of his play by the addition of personages humorous, moralizing, supernatural; and finally, to link the action of his drama by creating certain personages for pure dramatic necessity.

It has been seen that Shakespeare invents personages; there are certain degrees of invention which must be recognized at once. There are, in the first place, the personages who are entirely invented by Shakespeare in so far as one can be certain from a consideration of the extant sources; and secondly, there are the personages who are taken from a suggestion or a weak portrayal in the source and then elaborated or changed by Shake-

speare to such an extent that they become new and original figures—in reality Shakespeare's inventions. There are, in the plays, besides the different types of invented personages, certain characters who are taken from the sources and changed only slightly if at all.

In the strictest sense of the word, the personages belonging to the first group may alone be called Shakespeare's inventions, for they occur in no source that we know, and they appear to be characters who owe their existence entirely to Shakespeare. In the cases of some of the plays, we can be reasonably certain that we know all the invented personages, for there exists a perfectly satisfactory source for these plays, and the personages which appear in Shakespeare's plays and do not appear in the source are undoubtedly the poet's own creations. Examples of plays for which entirely satisfactory sources exist are as follows: *King John*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare surely needed no other original for the first of these than *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, for the second, Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*, and for the third, Greene's *Pandosto*. They are sufficient and we can account for the plot and most of the characters by a study of the sources, and the other figures can be called with certainty Shakespeare's creations.

In the case of other plays, however, it is impossible to be certain that all of the sources are extant. The great number of Elizabethan pieces of literature which we know have perished makes us reasonably certain that Shakespeare must have had at his disposal much that has not come down to us. Examples of plays for which we do not have a satisfactory source are *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In the case of *The Merchant of Venice*, a play which combines in its plot two distinct stories—the casket story and the bond story—it is possible and even probable that there was a play earlier than Shakespeare's which combined these two familiar tales. Stephen Gosson refers in his *Schoole of Abuse* in 1579 to a play called *The Jew*, which "represents the greediness of worldly chusers and bloody minds of usurers."[2] As Shakespeare's play

[2] *The Schoole of Abuse*, ed. by E. Arber, p. 40.

was not written until 1597, Gosson could of course not be referring to it, and, therefore, it seems possible that there was an earlier play with the same combination of stories to which the later dramatist may have referred. Since the personages, then, whom we called invented in this drama may have had prototypes in the earlier play, we can call them only probably wholly Shakespeare's.

As regards *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, a somewhat similar condition exists. Shakespeare certainly knew the popular Spanish romance *Diana* by Jorge de Montemayor either in the original form or in some translation. The figures in this romance which probably served the dramatist as originals for Proteus and Julia are Felix and Felismena, as their stories have many similarities. Most of the other figures in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* seem to be Shakespeare's inventions, if we consider *Diana* as the only source. But it is possible that Shakespeare had also before him an earlier play on the same subject, as there is entered in the Revels' Accounts of 1584–1585 a play called *The History of Felix and Philiomena*, which also probably used *Diana* as its source. This play is non-extant, but we must surely admit the possibility that Shakespeare knew the play, and found in it prototypes, not only for Proteus and Julia, but also for some of the other personages in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

In some cases we find a source for one part of the plot of a play, but none for another part; a case in point is *Much Ado About Nothing*. Italian stories furnish us with adequate sources for the Hero and Claudio story; on the other hand, there is no known source for the Benedick and Beatrice story. The *Benedicte and Betteris* registered in the Lord Treasurer's Accounts in 1612–1613 probably referred to *Much Ado* itself. It is possible that there are prototypes for the charming pair; it is probable that they are Shakespeare's own inventions. They are the types of characters which he enjoyed creating. Examples of personages which Shakespeare almost surely invented are as follows: the charming rogue Autolycus of *The Winter's Tale*, the grave, faithful Fool of *King Lear*, the majestic and credulous steward Malvolio of *Twelfth Night*, the melancholy Jaques of *As You*

Like It, the innocent and graceful Miranda of *The Tempest*. To this group belong also the inimitable comedy figures of Bottom and his associates in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, of those self-important officials, Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado*, of Shallow and Silence in *2 King Henry IV*, and of the pert soubrette Maria in *Twelfth Night*—all drawn with deep insight into human nature from the poet's own imagination.

To this first group, then, belong many of the comedy figures, some purely mechanical figures such as Salarino and Salanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, some figures necessary to the plot as Mariana in *Measure for Measure*, invented to preserve the chastity of Isabella, and thus to make possible Shakespeare's conception of that noble heroine.

To the second class—those personages elaborated and changed by Shakespeare—belong many of his greatest creations. It is the largest group, as well as the most interesting. The dramatist in this case takes a character found in the source and makes it over into a creation of his own. At times, he takes a mere type—a puppet with no personality or individuality—and breathes life into it; at times, he takes a minor figure, and changes it into an important one.

An example of Shakespeare's making a splendid creation from a type is seen in the case of Cordelia in *King Lear*. In the old play which Shakespeare used as source, Cordella is the good-daughter-who-suffers-but-gets-her-reward-in-the-end type, as opposed to the wicked sisters, Gonorill and Ragan. Cordella is merely good. She possesses no other attributes. When asked by her father how much she loves him, she says:

> "I cannot paint my duty forth in words,
> I hope my deeds will make report for me.
> But look what love the child doth owe the father.
> The same to you I bear, my gracious Lord."[3]

It might be the good daughter of any fairy tale king speaking. And when she is banished, she virtuously replies:

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[3] *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part II, vol. II, p. 315.

"I will betake me to my thread and needle.
And earn my living with my fingers ends."[4]

Shakespeare's Cordelia, crushed at her father's words, and herself possessing some of her father's pride, speaks no words of self-pity; she merely upholds her action in telling the truth.

Shakespeare omits Cordella's unnatural acceptance of the disguised palmer to whom she speaks in the following holy words:

"I'll hold thy palmer's staff within my hand.
And think it is the sceptre of a Queen
Sometime I'll set thy bonnet on my head
And think I wear a rich imperial crown.
Sometime I'll help thee in thy holy prayers
And think I am with thee in Paradise."[5]

A reconciliation with Leir comes later, in which Cordella is humble and over-virtuous. There is then a happy ending with Cordella, Leir, and Cordella's husband victorious over the forces of the evil sisters.

Shakespeare takes Cordella and transforms her into a real person. It is true that there are attributes which belong to both characters: Cordella and Cordelia have the same essential goodness, the same sincerity and hatred of flattery, the same power of forgiveness. But Shakespeare's personage is more human; she is possessed of dignity, pride, even the same will that characterizes her father; she meets no such unreal fate as Cordella does in wedding a Prince in disguise. And virtue does not receive its just reward, as Cordelia dies, a victim of the terrible, tragic events of Shakespeare's drama. She is to some extent responsible for her fate, as all of Shakespeare's great tragic figures are, as she refuses to humor the wilful old man, preferring to contrast her sincerity with her sisters' flattery. We find none of this in *King Leir*. The poignant and pitiful fate of Cordelia is not found in the older play.

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[4] *Ibid.*, p. 325.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 327.

Again, Shakespeare often makes a minor personage over into an important and memorable one, endowing with life and dramatic personality a person who was merely suggested in the source. An example of this type of invention is found in the case of Lady Macbeth, about whom Holinshed writes only these few words: "But specially his [Macbeth's] wife lay sore upon him to attempt the thing [the murder of the King] as she was very ambitious, burning in unquenchable desire to bear the name of a queen."[6] There is one more hint. Shakespeare took the actual account of Duncan's murder from another part of Holinshed—the relation of the murder of King Duffe by Donwald in which the wife of Donwald urges her husband to kill the King. And from those meagre suggestions Lady Macbeth is created—memorable indeed she is—"that awful figure of unsexed womanhood in which a passionate ambition for the husband with whom she has wholly identified herself raises her terrible criminality to the sublimity of a complete abnegation of self."[7] Terrible, ambitious, yes, and successful for a while; yet finally, in womanly weakness, a victim to Nemesis, Lady Macbeth is Shakespeare's most powerful creation of a woman—and she is Shakespeare's own creation.

Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra* is another such figure; Plutarch informs us that Antony dealt "courteously and friendly with Domitius [Enobarbus] . . . who . . . being sick . . . went unto Caesar's camp."[8] Antony sent his belongings to him, returning good for evil; "and the same Domitius, as though he gave him to understand that he repented his open treason, he died immediately after."[9] Another reference informs us that "Antony through the persuasion of Domitius commanded Cleopatra to return again to Egypt."[10] There are also other brief accounts of Enobarbus, mainly of his earlier political dealings with Caesar and Antony. Shakespeare takes these brief suggestions, and

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[6] R. Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. II. p. 160.

[7] F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Playwrights*, p. 152.

[8] T. North's "Plutarch," in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. III, p. 390.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 382.

creates one of his most vivid personages. Enobarbus is a character representing the normal man's viewpoint of the dramatic happenings in Egypt; yet he is also possessed of a striking and individual personality. Shakespeare changes him to the extent of making him confidant of Cleopatra as well as of Antony, thus making his comments on the action more effective and sound. The dramatist also has Enobarbus die of grief rather than of an illness, thus bringing his career to a more effective close. Cool, cynical, aloof, wise, he is Shakespeare's own creation.

There are examples also of instances when Shakespeare changes the personage that he finds in the source and invents a new person. Hotspur in *King Richard II* and *1 King Henry IV* is an example of this. In Holinshed, Hotspur is as old as Henry IV; he is an experienced soldier and not a restless youth. In Shakespeare's plays, on the other hand, we find him a young man about the age of Prince Hal, son of Henry IV, with whom he is constantly contrasted. He is called "young Harry Percy," and his fiery deeds, hot temper, reckless bravado, impetuosity and eagerness, his thirst for glory and honor, are all the attributes of a young man. Shakespeare follows Holinshed for the main events of Hotspur's life: his aid in putting Bolingbroke on the throne as Henry IV, his subsequent anger at the same monarch and rebellion against him, his death at Shrewsbury. And too in Holinshed the hot blood of the Percies flows in Hotspur's veins, but he is very different from Shakespeare's picturesque young soldier, obsessed with the desire for glory and honor, doomed through his temperament to ultimate failure.

Another example of a character changed from a source and becoming, as a result of that change, Shakespeare's own invention is Cressida. True, Shakespeare follows her story as Caxton tells it in his translation of Le Fevre's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, true also he gets some incidents from Chaucer, but how vastly different is Shakespeare's picture. Chaucer's Criseyde and the various pictures of her before Shakespeare's presented a truly charming girl, really in love with Troilus, yielding to him only when she knows he is faithful, suffering much unhappiness at her separation from him, and turning to another after a year's time, not after a few days. In Shakespeare's play, she is

false, wanton, selfish, never really in love with Troilus, ready to turn to another lover as soon as she is separated from him. She is another of Shakespeare's own inventions.

The dramatist at times throws a slightly different light on his personages, thus making them differ from their prototypes. Cleopatra and Isabella are examples of this. Even though Plutarch gives an admirable portrayal of Cleopatra, Shakespeare feels the necessity of showing her in a slightly different light. Shakespeare tells the story from Cleopatra's viewpoint as well as from Antony's; and where Plutarch bemoans the fate of Antony in losing his great dominions for a woman, Shakespeare, by making us feel more really than Plutarch does the "infinite variety" and great charm of the woman, leaves us with the feeling that Antony's seeming sacrifice is no sacrifice at all, but that he was rather the most fortunate of men.

Isabella is seen in a different light from her prototype, Cassandra. Cassandra gives herself to Promos to save her brother; Isabella does not, and furthermore Isabella could not. Shakespeare makes her a different being and creates her character in such a way that it would be dramatically erroneous for her to act as her prototype did.

This second class forms a large and intensely interesting group. Here belong the great figures of Shakespeare's heroes and heroines, Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, Isabella, Cressida, Rosalind, and many more; here also belong other imaginative portrayals such as Enobarbus, Hotspur, the Bastard, Kent; and surely these personages are as much Shakespeare's own invention as are those that have no prototypes in the source. Is Macbeth the Macbeth of Holinshed, or Lear the king of the old chronicle play, or Cressida the gay and charming young heroine of Chaucer's poem? The answer to these questions is surely in the negative; and when the question arises as to whom these personages owe their existence, there is but one answer—Shakespeare.

The third group of personages is mentioned merely to complete our exposition of "invented" personages, as it does not properly come within the range of this discussion. These are the personages who are taken from the sources with little or no

change in characterization, and belong therefore to the author of the source rather than to Shakespeare. This group is composed largely of those characters who do not interest Shakespeare a great deal. They are necessary for the action of the drama, but they are not vital enough to arouse the creative art of the dramatist; he is content to take them as they are and not attempt elaboration. Examples of this group are the many minor historical characters in the Roman plays and in the English chronicle plays, characters who are taken from Plutarch unchanged in the one case, and from Holinshed unchanged in the other. There is at times, however, only a difference of degree between these characters and those in the second group.

It must be noted that when Shakespeare uses Plutarch for source, he, as a rule, makes little change in either the minor or the major personages. The characters of Antony, of Brutus, of Coriolanus undergo little elaboration or change in Shakespeare and, while there are touches which are added by the dramatist, there is not a great elaboration or change of character such as is found when Shakespeare uses other sources.

We have seen thus far that there are three groups into which the personages of Shakespeare's plays fall, as far as their degree of originality is concerned. The groups are: first, the personages who are entirely Shakespeare's, having no prototype in the sources; secondly, the personages who are suggested in the source but elaborated by Shakespeare to such an extent that they likewise are his own inventions; and finally, the personages who are taken from the source with little or no change. We have noted also the various types of characters which prevail in the three groups, as well as the different types of invention: pure invention, and elaboration or change of originals as found in the sources. Shakespeare, the inventor of characters, comes more clearly before us as we compare his plays with their sources.

II

Shakespeare's Use of Character Invention When Portraying the Various Strata of Society

Shakespeare is more inventive when he is portraying personages who belong to certain social classes in which he as a dramatist is interested than when he is dealing with those of other groups. Throughout his plays, one finds representatives of some of the social units appealing to the creative and inventive power of the dramatist, and, at the same time, it is equally noticeable that other types fail to stir his interest. Particularly, for example, does the original genius of Shakespeare manifest itself when he is portraying the lower classes of society; the "rude mechanicals" of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the dull officers of the law in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the pert soubrette of *Twelfth Night*, and many others are his own. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss Shakespeare's use of character invention when he is portraying figures from the various social ranks.

Shakespeare, in common with other Elizabethan dramatists, had a penchant for writing of kings, queens, princes, dukes, and lords. If one knew nothing of the period except that which could be learned from the drama of the time, one would believe that a large number of the people were royal, most of the others noble, and the rest largely of the lowest classes, mainly humorous beings whose follies relieved the rather monotonous lives of the nobility. In only one play does Shakespeare take his personages—with a single exception—from the middle class, in reality the largest class of society. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare portrays figures from that class, and in doing so manifests a high degree of inventive skill. It is true that we have portrayed in *The Merchant of Venice* and in *The Comedy of Errors* the merchant class, but only once do we come in contact with the real English middle class.

Never in tragedy nor in chronicle play does Shakespeare draw his main personages from any class but the nobility; in the case of the chronicle play this was necessary as, in general, only the

upper classes made history. This practice, a heritage from Greek drama, was common to all Elizabethan playwrights; a writer of tragedy would choose his personages from the middle classes only in the case of domestic tragedy, as for example in *Arden of Feversham*. The names of royalty, historical and fictitious, figure largely in English drama in and before the time of Shakespeare. From *Gorbuduc*, the first real English tragedy, we can trace a long line of dramas having for their main characters kings and queens.

Shakespeare adhered to this custom of his age, that of making royalty the chief distinction between dramatic and undramatic persons; and in tragedy, history, and largely in comedy too, he draws many of his personages from the nobility. This group may be subdivided according to the part which they play in Shakespeare's dramas. First, there is the group of nobles who are apart from the main action of the piece, and consequently are not elaborately characterized. In the second place, there are the heroes and heroines of the plays who are drawn from the noble ranks, and are outstanding among Shakespeare's figures. In the third group are certain comic figures who, although possessed of few attributes of gentility, belong to the knighthood.

The characters of the first of these groups have little part in the struggles of the major personages. In some cases they represent law and justice, and seek to curb the unruly actions of the other personages. Examples of this type are Prince Escalus in *Romeo and Juliet*, the Duke in *The Merchant of Venice*, the Duke in *The Comedy of Errors*, and Theseus in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The group is not elaborately drawn nor are the personages in it individual. They stand for the fact that there is authority and justice—Escalus warns the two opposing families, and then punishes them for their lack of obedience; the Duke in *The Merchant of Venice* sits as judge at Antonio's trial, and attempts to moderate Shylock's cruel plans; in *The Comedy of Errors*, the Duke insists on the following of the law, yet is merciful and in the end happy in the reunion of Ægeon and his family; Theseus controls the fate of the two pairs of lovers, as he judges the case brought before him.

Another group of nobles whose actions lie apart from the

main plot is that group of courtiers who surround the main characters in many of the plays. The Earls of Pembroke, Essex, and Salisbury in *King John;* the Earls of Westmoreland and Warwick in *King Henry V*; the minor conspirators in *Julius Caesar*, and many more are examples of this group. They are not individual at all, as a rule, but are rather necessary parts of the action only.

Shakespeare is not inventive to any large degree with these heads of states and lesser courtiers. In most instances they are taken from the source with little change, as in the cases of Escalus, the Duke in *The Merchant of Venice*, Theseus, the Earls in *King John* and in *King Henry V*, the minor conspirators in *Julius Caesar;* and even when they are invented entirely as is the case with the Dukes in *The Comedy of Errors* and in *Othello*, they are not fully portrayed, or definitely characterized, and appear in only a few scenes.

The second division of the groups of nobility represented in Shakespeare's plays includes the kings, queens, princes, dukes who are leading personages in the plays; for example, King Lear, Macbeth, Hamlet, Antony, Cleopatra, and the kings and queens of the English chronicle plays. In the main, we find Shakespeare inventive with this group of personages. Most of them have prototypes in some source which Shakespeare follows with varying degrees of fidelity, but in practically every case the great dramatist elaborates, changes, emphasizes, until the personages are his own inventions. Here, as elsewhere, he invents when it is necessary, and only when it is necessary.

Illustrative of Shakespeare's use of invention when his hero is a royal person is Leontes in *The Winter's Tale;* in Greene's *Pandosto*, Leontes' prototype is Pandosto, King of Bohemia. Shakespeare changes and elaborates Greene's portrayal and presents an original creation. The novelist tells his story in such a way that the hero is given some cause for jealousy; Pandosto's suspicions are not unwarranted, as his wife carries her attentions to the visiting King to such a point that, although she remains innocent, Pandosto may well be pardoned for his suspicions. Shakespeare, however, makes the situation more intense by portraying his hero as a man who is insanely jealous without cause.

We lose all sympathy for him as he publicly denounces his wife, and orders his infant daughter to be sent to "some remote and distant place." Shakespeare also changes the ending of Greene's story, and substitutes the reunion of Leontes and Hermione for Pandosto's suicide. The jealous, headstrong, and repentant monarch of *The Winter's Tale* is largely Shakespeare's creation.

In all his dramas except the Roman ones, we find Shakespeare highly inventive with his noble heroes and heroines. Even when his source is history, is this true. Shakespeare does not feel bound by his originals even when they are chronicles. As a rule, the dramatist follows the actions of his historical characters as they are found in the sources, but he often changes the chronology of the actions, and also gives a different and truer portrayal of the characters, even though they do the very same things that their prototypes do. Two examples taken from the chronicle plays will illustrate these facts. The case of Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard II is an instance of his inventive skill even when his hero is a king of England.

Shakespeare takes the character of Richard as portrayed in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, and gives a highly poetic characterization of the spoiled, capricious, yet in some ways charming monarch. Shakespeare follows the actions of Richard as they are told in Holinshed, but he accomplishes what the historian makes no attempt to accomplish, he presents with a degree of attractiveness the weak and selfish king; Richard II is pampered, presumptuous, voluptuous, scornful of the cares and duties of his office, susceptible to flattery. Shakespeare portrays Richard in the first three acts of his drama as being as despicable as Holinshed says he is. In the last two acts, however, the master dramatist brings out the good traits of his hero, and even makes us pity his many adversities, and recognize some kingly qualities in the man. Richard becomes thus more human in that his character combines good and evil elements, and his faults seem merely those of humanity in general. Shakespeare also touches the death scene with pathos, and we feel almost as if Richard did not deserve his fate. Shakespeare thus changes and throws a new light upon an historical personage.

Another such example is that of the dashing young Prince Hal of *1* and *2 King Henry IV*, later ascending the throne as Henry V. There are two sources for these dramas in which he appears, and in both of these there are prototypes of Shakespeare's personage. The sources are Holinshed's *Chronicles* and the older play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. Both of these accounts furnish suggestions rather than finished pictures of Henry. Shakespeare draws upon both of these, yet his picture is original. The author of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* portrays the young Prince as a companion of robbers and low fellows who find their amusement and means of livelihood in stealing from the King's carriers. They haunt ale houses and inns and take part in drunken brawls and riots. Prince Hal is one of them, hardly better than the worst of his companions; he wishes his father dead, and promises high positions to his companions when he shall be king. Then he hears of his father's illness, and suddenly reforms, so suddenly indeed that the scene lacks *vraisemblance*. He then rebukes his former friends and enters upon his duties as King of England. Holinshed furnishes Shakespeare with the following: "Indeed he [Prince Hal] was youthfullie given, growne to audacitie, and had chosen companions agreeable to his age; with whome he spent the time in such recreations, exercises, and delights as he fansied. But yet (it would seem by the report of some writers) that his behaviour was not offensive or at least tending to the damage of anie bodie; sith he had a care to avoid dooing of wrong and to tedder his affections within the tract of vertue."[1]

Shakespeare follows Holinshed's suggestion that the Prince's actions were "within the tract of vertue," and pictures him as apart from his low companions, entering into their deeds only for sport, and returning any stolen property. He is a lover of jesting and jolly companionship, but he is not bad. His apparent reformation is no reformation at all; it is merely showing himself to the public as he really is. He is a charming person in Shakespeare's plays; he is prudent, honest, a devotee of honor, and at the same time a youthful lover of sport. Shakespeare

[1] W. G. Boswell-Stone, *Shakespeare's Holinshed*, p. 57.

owes something to Holinshed and to the author of *The Famous Victories of Henry V* for his portrait of Henry as king as well as for his portrait of Henry as prince. Holinshed pictures him as a king "Of life without spot; a prince whome all men loved . . .; a capteine against whome fortune never frowned . . .; whose people him so severe a justice both loved and obeyed, (and so human withall) that he left no offense unpunished, no freendship unrewarded; a terrour to rebels, and suppressour of sedition; his vertues notable, his qualities most praiseworthie."[2] From *The Famous Victories*, Shakespeare takes certain suggestions which he works over; for example, Henry's wooing of the French Princess, and his peace terms with her father. But Shakespeare adds to both these sources, and his portrait of Henry is more lifelike than Holinshed's, more complete than the older dramatist's. Shakespeare's Henry is the dramatist's idea of the "perfect monarch"—a patriot in the truest sense of the word, a king and also a human being. The characterization has been criticized by some who think Henry is too good—almost a prig—and perhaps Shakespeare was carried away by his wish to portray England's ideal king; in any case the portrait of Henry V in the three plays in which he appears is almost entirely Shakespeare's own.

At times, Shakespeare takes his comic figures from the ranks of the distinguished gentry—the knighthood; Sir John Falstaff, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek are examples. It is true that these three bear few, if any, traits of gentility; yet Shakespeare has prefixed "Sir" to their names. With this group Shakespeare is—as he always is with his comedy figures—highly inventive. There have been many attempts to discover a prototype for Falstaff. The two suggestions which have proved most popular are: first, that he was suggested by Sir John Oldcastle of *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, but Sir John is a low, worthless fellow, possessed of no wit or humor, and he appears only a few times in the play; and secondly, that Falstaff's prototype is the historical Sir John Fastolfe, mentioned in Holinshed. But there is little, if any similarity, between Falstaff and

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

these two suggested prototypes. The fat and erring knight, one of the great comic figures of the world, is Shakespeare's own invention. There is no known source for the gay toper, Sir Toby Belch, or for the foolish, self-satisfied, cowardly Sir Andrew.

Shakespeare, it may be said in general, is inventive with the nobility and gentry when its representatives are either major personages in the play or when they are figures of comedy; he is not particularly inventive when the nobles are minor figures in the plays. We find the same condition of affairs when we consider the characters who belong to the upper class of society though not to the nobility. With this group, as well as with the preceding one, Shakespeare is inventive with major personages and with comic figures, and we find him giving little attention to the characters of minor importance.

Such major figures as Antonio, merchant of Venice, Bassanio, his friend, Petruchio and Katharine in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Claudio and Isabella in *Measure for Measure*—all belong to the upper class of society. They are all leading personages, and they are all well drawn by Shakespeare; although they are all taken from some source, yet in every case the dramatist makes them his own creations in various ways: by inventing new traits for them, and by making their actions appear more logical and more natural.

One example will suffice to show that Shakespeare is here, as elsewhere, following his plan of making outstanding portraits of his major personages, no matter how meagre the source may be. Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew* is a case in point. The story of the taming of a shrewish wife is an old one in literature; the direct prototype of Petruchio is undoubtedly Ferando in the old play, *The Taming of a Shrew*. While the two portrayals are similar in some respects, we find the following differences: Shakespeare gives Petruchio a motive for his marriage with Katharine, reputed a terrible shrew, this motive being his need of money; he is frankly looking for a wealthy wife — this gives a reason for his undertaking the affair in the first place; Shakespeare makes his hero unacquainted with Kate till the time when he goes to woo her; in the source Ferando knows the shrew and has been offered six thousand crowns by her father if

he will wed the girl. Shakespeare makes Petruchio's actions more logical, and thus makes him a more human character.

Shakespeare likewise throws a different light on Katharine. In the old play we are told of her shrewishness; in Shakespeare's play we actually behold it. The later dramatist also makes us feel some reasons for Kate's shrewishness—particularly the constant praise given to the beautiful Bianca who Kate knows is far her inferior in mentality. Also, the heroine of Shakespeare's play does not become the spiritless, passive person that her prototype does; she retains her spirit to the end.

With figures of comedy, as well as with major personages, Shakespeare is inventive when dealing with representatives of the upper classes. Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and Gratiano in *The Merchant of Venice* are examples of this group.

Mercutio is mentioned in Brooke's poem, but there is little characterization. Brooke says,

> "A courtier that eche where was highly had in pryce
> For he was courteous of his speche, and pleasant of device.
> Even as a lyon would among the lambs be bolde
> Such was emong the bashfull maydes Mercutio to beholde."[3]

This is a mere suggestion of Shakespeare's light-hearted, good natured, exuberant, witty young man.

There is no source for Gratiano. The good-humored, impulsive friend of Bassanio is Shakespeare's own invention. These two—Mercutio and Gratiano—are not figures of low comedy as are Falstaff and Sir Andrew and Sir Toby; they are witty, rather than possessed of coarse humor. They are comic figures of a different kind.

Shakespeare may make characters from the upper classes merely mechanical figures, as he does at times when portraying the royalty. He is not inventive with this group as they are taken without change from the source, or, even if Shakespeare invents them, they are possessed of no individuality. Examples

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[3] Arthur Brooke, *Romeus and Juliet*, in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. I, p. 86.

are Salarino and Salanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, merely mechanical figures who serve as links in the plot.

As has been mentioned, we find Shakespeare in one play giving a vivid picture of the lower middle classes in the charming *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Shakespeare shows great use of invention with this group, and thus proves once again the wide scope of his genius as an originator of personages. The source of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is probably some Italian tale, retold in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*. There are several versions of the story, but in all of these we find two or more ladies who are made love to by the same man. They plan to get even with the man, and do so by bringing him to the home of one of them, and then on the pretense that her husband is returning, subjecting the unfortunate man to some undignified and unpleasant means of escape. There is little characterization in these tales; the personages of Shakespeare's play owe only some of their actions to the sources, nothing of their characterization. The merry but faithful wives, the suspicious Ford, the easy-going Page, Falstaff, who is of course never in love, and the group of minor figures are largely Shakespeare's inventions.

Although the great dramatist in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, alone of all his plays, takes his major personages from the middle class, he, nevertheless, has portrayed in other plays representatives of that class in the persons of characters of various professions or trades. Some of these figures belong to a higher stratum of society than the middle class, but they will be considered in this group.

Shakespeare was not interested in portraying any profession as a whole; he was, on the other hand, often interested in individual members of some professional group. For example, although many of his churchmen are mere representatives of the clergy and have as a result many traits in common, there is, nevertheless, an occasional portrayal which is both original and individual. To say that Shakespeare was a lawyer because of his fine portrayal of a member of this profession is no more justifiable than saying that he was a churchman, or a merchant, because he happens to portray with understanding people of these occupations. Shakespeare draws human beings, not types

or classes. There are two kinds of churchmen portrayed in Shakespeare's plays: there are the friars, such as Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the churchmen of high rank such as Wolsey in *King Henry VIII*. Shakespeare is not very inventive with the first group. Friar Laurence is very much like his prototype in Brooke's poem; in both he is a friend to the lovers and helps them with all his power. Shakespeare makes him more a representative of his order than a person, by giving him long, moral soliloquies which sound more like what a friar should say than what he actually would say. The two friars in *Measure for Measure* are invented by Shakespeare, but they have no individuality. They are helpful as Friar Laurence is, but we know nothing of their characters.

Shakespeare is, as a rule, not any more inventive with his churchmen of high rank. They appear chiefly in the chronicle plays. Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York, who appears in *1* and *2 King Henry IV* is an example. Shakespeare follows his source, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, very faithfully. There is little given in either of the plays or in the source of the Archbishop's character; he is merely a necessary link in the action. It is true that we can gather that he is bold and enterprising, forthright and moral, but he is not an outstanding creation. Cardinal Pandulph in *King John* is another example of a churchman of high rank, who is taken almost entirely from the source, *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*. In this case, Shakespeare's figure is not so objectionable as his prototype is, though both authors show the ambition, sophistry, and insincerity of the court of Rome in their portrayal of this representative of it. Cardinal Wolsey in *King Henry VIII* is, unlike the others, an interesting and well drawn character. Although his actions are taken from Holinshed, his character is made more dynamic and dramatic in the play. We see him crafty, subtle, ambitious, unscrupulous, cruel. We follow his dramatic rise and fall, and feel that we are dealing with a person, not a type. We feel pity for him in the end, though we disapprove of his actions in rising to his high place. Even though one admits Fletcher's hand in parts of *King Henry VIII*, it seems that Wolsey's character is drawn by Shakespeare. The Cardinal's type of

personality and the manner of the portrayal seem Shakespearean rather than Fletcherian.

We find that Shakespeare is not inventive when portraying physicians. The doctors in *Macbeth*, the doctor in *King Lear*, even the doctor in *Cymbeline* are merely called in for professional services. They are all original with Shakespeare, but they possess no individuality. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare presents a mocking picture of a French physician in Doctor Caius. He is mocked more for being a Frenchman than for being a doctor, however. He is a figure of low comedy, boastful, conceited, full of mock bravery. He speaks broken English, and doubtless raised many guffaws from the pit. Although he was probably invented by Shakespeare, his is no real personality; he is merely a comic type.

There is in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* a similar portrayal of a schoolmaster. Sir Hugh Evans is a Welsh parson, but he is also master of the grammar school. He is likewise a caricature; he is cowardly, overbearing, impatient, and speaks broken English. Another such portrait is Holophernes in *Love's Labor's Lost.* He is closely akin to the pedant of Italian comedy, with his learned speeches, his inflated language, his Latin quotations. These are not very original figures; they occur in Shakespeare's early works, and show little inventive skill on the part of the dramatist.

Shakespeare presents a splendid portrayal of a lawyer in Portia. At the trial of Antonio she shows a keen knowledge of the law, a power to turn it to her own use, a quickness and penetration in so doing, a sternness in her insistence on the carrying out of the law. Portia is, of course, much more than a clever lawyer; she is an intellectual, dignified, highbred, thoroughly charming woman, too. Although she has a prototype in the collection of tales, *Il Pecorone*, and may have had another in an earlier play, one feels sure that she is Shakespeare's invention. Her actions may have been determined by an earlier writer; her personality was surely given to her by Shakespeare.

There are several portrayals of merchants in the plays of Shakespeare. Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* is most fully drawn. He is largely invented by Shakespeare, if the sources of the drama are all extant. His prototype in *Il Pecorone* and other

suggested sources falls into debt to a usurer, and must pay with his life, and then is saved. Antonio's actions are made more logical, and his character is made more natural and more comprehensible.

Shakespeare portrays representatives of other occupations, also; for example, he pictures justices in *Measure for Measure*, and in other plays; masters of ships in *Twelfth Night*, and in *The Tempest*, and elsewhere, but he is not inventive with either of these classes; or we find portrayed in *Troilus and Cressida* commanders of the army, but here again the dramatist is not inventive, as the pictures are taken largely from *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, or again we meet actors in *Hamlet*, but they have little individuality. There are also personages of the lower classes who are representatives of various occupations; these will be considered in the next classification.

Generally speaking, Shakespeare was interested in no one occupation to the exclusion of others; he drew his personages from all walks of life, and was interested in the individuals, not in the groups. He has drawn splendid portraits of a cardinal, a lawyer, and a merchant, but that is no indication that the dramatist was interested particularly in representatives of those occupations. He was instead interested in those three persons, and is responsible for their being the life-like creations that they are.

Shakespeare is highly inventive with the people of the lower classes—the common folk. Often he invents them entirely, so that critics search in vain for any prototypes for such figures as Dogberry and Malvolio. At times, he elaborates an unimportant personage in his source, but most often these figures are original with him.

These personages are usually brought into the play for the purpose of humor, or to give a light touch in the midst of serious drama. But they are never ridiculed or scorned by Shakespeare; they are merely created, and we laugh at their actions as we might at those of people we know. These common folk fall into groups, and representatives of the various ones appear again and again in Shakespeare's plays. There are certain types which are found often; yet, in practically every case, they are distinct and individual.

One popular type is the clown. In Elizabethan English a clown meant a "simple, boorish fellow." He was often uncouth and therefore provocative of mirth, but unconsciously so. These clowns fall also into classes: country folk and servant clowns, and the gruesome but humorous grave-digger and murderer clowns. Outstanding among the country folk are Bottom and his associates in *Midsummer Night's Dream;* we feel sure that these fellows are Shakespeare's creations, even though no satisfactory source has been found for this play. They are truly inimitable. They are English through and through, surely not Athenian, in spite of Shakespeare's words,

> "A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
> That work for bread upon Athenian stalls."[4]

Shakespeare is here drawing upon life, not upon literature. They are all individual—Quince the carpenter, leader of the group who wishes to present a play for Theseus and his bride; Bottom the weaver, conceited, "bossy," self-contented, stupid, wishing to take every part in the play; Flute the bellows-mender, who must play the woman's part against his will; Snout, a tinker, the wall in the play; Starveling, a tailor who represents the moon, a man of peace who objects to the lion and the sword in the play; Snug the joiner, "slow of study," who must take the lion's part as it requires no memorizing. All are splendidly and faithfully drawn. Each has his own personality and could never have been copied from another.

No less Shakespeare's own creation is the clown in *Antony and Cleopatra* who brings the asp to the Egyptian queen. Although he is mentioned in the source, and although his actions are much the same in Shakespeare, nevertheless there is the breath of life in him only in the drama, even though he appears in but one scene. In the midst of tragedy Shakespeare introduces as he often does, a little humor—the humor of relief. The clown offers Cleopatra the asp, and his few words about it characterize him. Possessed of dry wit, dull, loquacious, proud of his errand, he is a real person.

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[4] Act III, Scene ii.

The servant clown is seen in the cases of Launce and Speed in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* They are servants of Proteus and Valentine respectively. Speed has no prototype in Montemayor's *Diana,* source for *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.* He is the proverbial household clown, friendly and fond of his fellow servants. He loves to pun, makes ridiculous errors in speech, is the possessor of a certain amount of comic logic. He is a compound of acuteness and effrontery. Launce has a prototype in *Diana;* Fabius is the servant of the original of Proteus. Launce is more like Fabius in action than in character; he is humorous rather than witty, honest, coarse, shrewd, sententious. He is a broader comic figure than is Speed. Both of them perhaps owe something to the influence of Lyly whose favorite kinds of characters were in vogue at the time when *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was written. Launce shows an advance upon the art of Lyly; his scene with his dog is perfect as farcical drollery, and is similar to other scenes of Shakespeare's. Speed is more a representative of a group of qualities; Launce, more an individual.

Another variety of clown is the grave-digger such as we find in *Hamlet,* or the murderer, such as those in *King Richard III.* These two groups are classed as clowns as they have the following traits in common with the country fellow and servant clown: simplicity, unconscious humor, and a liking for "chop-logic."

The grave-diggers in *Hamlet* are original with Shakespeare. We meet them as they are digging Ophelia's grave—another example of comedy in the midst of tragedy. They are talkative, argumentative, would-be logical. The first clown talks later to Hamlet and Horatio, and discloses the notions of his class as to what is transpiring in Denmark. The second grave-digger is merely a foil to the first. The murderers in *King Richard III* are invented by Shakespeare. They are thoroughly individualized; one is bold, brazen, insolent, ready to do any evil for money. The second is dull, stupid, frightened, cowardly, repentant. They are unforgettable even though they appear only twice in the play. Such clowns are, as a rule, Shakespeare's own inventions. They have certain relations one to the other, but each is individual as well.

Second in the group of common folk are the constables and

other petty officials; for example, Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Shallow and Silence in *2 King Henry IV*, and Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*. This group is entirely original with the dramatist. Although each of these petty officials is endowed with a personality distinctly his own, all of them have, nevertheless, certain traits in common. Possessed of a little authority, they have a feeling of superiority over their fellows, and this leads to their being pompous and dictatorial. They are for the most part dull fellows, and the humor which they display is usually unconscious. Despite these traits in common, each figure is a real human being and an unforgettable characterization. Dogberry and Verges are constable and headborough respectively of the town in which they live. They are both proud of their position, and make the most of their little authority. Dogberry has more importance but less sense than has Verges. He is an incredible simpleton, conceited, full of self-consequence and ineptitude. In giving out their duties to the watch, he loses no chance of showing off his importance, he will hear of no infringement on his authority. He cuts short any attempt to aid him, certain that he can say better than anyone else what must be said. Later, in his attempt to tell Leonato of the treachery of Don John, he talks in so roundabout a way that he is dismissed before he can tell his story. He is formal and ceremonious in his duty as judge and assumes all credit for the arrest of the villains. He is a perfect specimen of a blundering and pretentious official. Verges is more sensible than his superior, but he has no chance to say a word. He is continually quieted by Dogberry who assumes that Verges is not his equal. These two are invented by Shakespeare and delightful inventions they are.

Shallow and Silence are country justices, and are likewise original, as well as most entertaining, creations. Shallow is proud, officious, complacent. When we meet him first, he is recalling his youthful days and being very loquacious about them. He tries to fool even himself about his having been on familiar terms with the nobility. He becomes obsequious when he entertains Falstaff, and we are sorry to see his hopes for advancement crushed, as the new king ignores his former favorite,

Sir John. Silence justifies his name most of the time. He is taciturn, affectedly dignified, obsequious when we first meet him. But with delightful irony, Shakespeare makes him a different being after he has "made good cheer" at Shallow's supper. He becomes merry, and sings, and quotes poetry, and we are sorry that he has "been merry [but] twice and once ere now."

Malvolio is another of this group. Although he serves in a private capacity, and although he is possessed of more wit than Dogberry, Verges, Shallow, and Silence, he, nevertheless, bears some kinship to them. He is slow, majestic, dignified; he has no sense of humor, but he is no fool none the less. He is, however, the perfect butt for the jokes of that merry crew: Sir Toby, Feste, and Maria. Because of his overwhelming conceit, he is an easy prey to the plot that makes him believe that Olivia is in love with him. He becomes the laughing stock of the household, is put in prison for his follies, yet he never loses his dignity. He is another of Shakespeare's memorable and original creations.

Another group of personages drawn from the lower classes is the band of cunning companions which we find in *1* and *2 King Henry IV*, *King Henry V*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. These persons were followers of Falstaff, and are always associated with him. Some of them appear in all four of the plays; others, in one or two. They were, in all probability, suggested by the group of robbers in *The Famous Victories of Henry V*. Shakespeare's figures are not very pleasing personages, but they are not as evil as their prototypes are. Those in *The Famous Victories* are highwaymen and roisterers; they steal with every intention of keeping the money. In Shakespeare's plays some of them, at least, rob as a joke. Poins is the best of the lot; he is jolly and teasing, a keen and witty rascal, possessed of a certain fascination that counts with Prince Hal; he seems possessed even of a minor degree of gentility. Gadshill, on the other hand, is merely a thief; Peto is a coward; Bardolph, a gruff, amusing drunkard; Pistol is unrefined, but witty and a bit of a philosopher too; Nym is hopelessly vulgar. Shakespeare takes the idea of the group from his source, but he invented the personalities of the individuals, distinguishing each from the others.

Another group with which we find Shakespeare inventive is the group of innkeepers. The host of the Garter Inn in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is probably Shakespeare's own invention; he is jolly, merry, lusty, coarse, talkative, canny in his dealings. The dramatist is likewise inventive with hostesses of inns, and we find Mistress Quickly of the chronicle plays a real individual, and an original one. She is coarse, rowdy, ready to fight for her rights, yet honest and good-hearted.

Shakespeare is inventive also when he is portraying the common soldier. Bates and Williams in *King Henry V* are examples. They appear in no source, and are seen as real individuals in Shakespeare's play, even though they are given but a brief touch; Bates is loyal but frightened at the idea of the imminent battle; Williams is vigorous, impulsive, the victim of a practical joke, throughout which he conducts himself manfully. Shakespeare likewise invents the ridiculous recruits in *2 King Henry IV:* the cowardly Bullcalf and Mouldy who offer money to be freed from service, the meek Shadow, Wart, and Feeble who must go. A touch only is given to each, but there is the breath of life in them all.

One of the most interesting groups in all of Shakespeare's plays is that of the professional fools. Illustrative of this group is the fool in *Twelfth Night;* he is an invention of Shakespeare's, having no original in the sources. Although the fool was a popular type in Elizabethan plays, each of Shakespeare's creations stands apart from the type, each is an individual. Feste in *Twelfth Night* has been called the "musical fool" of Shakespeare, as his songs are among the sweetest in the plays. He has the gift of jesting, of moralizing, of teasing. The comedy and the romance of the play meet in him, as he is a part of both the love story and the comic sub-plot. He is a proper fool for comedy. He is Shakespeare's own invention.

The Fool in *Lear* is an extension of the idea of the fool to a new and impressive use. Bradley writes, "One can almost imagine that Shakespeare, going home from an evening at the Mermaid where he had listened to Jonson fulminating against fools . . . had said to himself . . . 'I will have a fool in the most tragic of my tragedies. He shall not play a little part. He shall keep from

first to last the company . . . of a king. Instead of amusing the king's idle hours, he shall stand by him in the very tempest and whirlwind of passion. Before I finish you shall confess between laughter and tears, that he is of the very essence of life, that you have known him all your days though you never recognized him till now, and that you would as soon go without Hamlet as miss him.'"[5] And Shakespeare accomplished his plan.

Shakespeare portrays with much charm certain pastoral figures, attractive creations who seem to be conceived in a spirit of delicate raillery. In *As You Like It*, for example, we meet some of the inhabitants of the forest of Arden. There are two classes represented: first, the refined, more or less Arcadian, shepherd, Silvius, and his sweetheart, Phebe; and secondly, the rustic country fellow William, and his love, Audrey. There are prototypes for Silvius and Phebe in Lodge's *Rosalynde*, but the prototypes are merely idealized Arcadian shepherds with no human qualities. Shakespeare makes his figures refined but not idealized; they are human beings. William and Audrey are entirely Shakespeare's inventions. They are rustic, earthy, simple, each a real personality.

Shakespeare has drawn with originality certain women of the lower classes: soubrettes, bawds, servants. Maria in *Twelfth Night* has been called the most perfect soubrette in literature. She is small, pert, bubbling over with life. She is fond of revelry and jesting, not spiteful; she is merry, attractive, not entirely proper—perfect of her kind. Although there is a soubrette in *Gl'Ingannati*, one of the suggested sources of *Twelfth Night*, Maria owes nothing to her. Shakespeare portrays bawds in the persons of Mistress Overdone in *Measure for Measure* and Doll Tearsheet in *2 King Henry IV;* the two creations are Shakespeare's, though Mistress Overdone is suggested possibly by a figure in *Promos and Cassandra*. Both are common, coarse, selfish; Doll Tearsheet is a representative of a class rather than an individual. Mistress Overdone has much in common with the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet;* they are both coarse-grained, utterly immoral, talkative, presumptuous.

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[5] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 311.

Juliet's nurse has a prototype in Arthur Brooke's poem, and she is like the earlier portrayal in many ways. Both are garrulous, coarse, fond of their mistress, ready to urge another lover when Romeo is gone. Shakespeare adds to the portrayal of Brooke by making her more real; she is one of his greatest creations. She is "own sister to Pandarus," in her joy in maneuvering the affairs of the lovers. She is a universal figure, and at the same time a highly individual one.

There are other servants; many of them are merely for the action and have no qualities of their own; many however, are fully portrayed. For example, Falstaff's little page, Davy in *2 King Henry IV*, and the porter in *Macbeth* are servants who have only one scene, but are vivid nevertheless. Falstaff's page is an invention of Shakespeare's; he is small, comic, faithful, bright; he will do anything for his master, but will also help in a joke against him. In *The Merry Wives* he bears Falstaff's love letters, and also enters into the fun planned by Mistress Page and Mistress Ford. Davy is servant to Shallow; he is loquacious, frightened at the thought of entertaining Sir John Falstaff, and hopes to "see London once ere he dies." He is invented by Shakespeare, as is the drunken porter in *Macbeth;* this last is brought in to relieve the intensity of the scene after Duncan's murder.

Autolycus, "a rogue," stands alone as the only one of his kind portrayed by Shakespeare. He is the most delightful of rogues! Appearing with the charming sylvan group in *The Winter's Tale*, he has a perfect setting for his actions. He is a rascal, a scapegrace, a thief, if you will; but his brilliant wit, his sparkling versatility make up for any lack of character. He has the perfect philosophy for a rogue. He despises those whom he can cheat, and he never loses his self-respect. He is a rogue not for malice, but for pleasure. Although he is akin to the fools with his songs and his philosophy and his wit, his charm is his own. There is no prototype for Autolycus. He is Shakespeare's own.

Shakespeare is exceptionally inventive when he is dealing with the lower classes. In most cases, he invents entirely, not even taking a suggestion from the source. Shakespeare is always amused at the logic of the common folk and he portrays this

group with infinite care as to detail. He never patronizes them, nor caricatures them, but rather gives us faithful representations of many of these folk. Shakespeare is no impressionist; his personages of the lower classes are, as a rule, vividly drawn and true to life.

From the foregoing discussion it may be seen that Shakespeare is entirely inventive in most cases when he is portraying personages of the lowest classes. This procedure arises of necessity because of the fact that his sources, as a rule, lacked originals for these figures which are usually introduced for humorous purposes. We find Shakespeare inventive with representatives of the upper classes—when those representatives are main or comic figures—but we note that here he uses the method of elaboration rather than that of pure invention, as he finds prototypes for most of these figures in the sources, and therefore need only enlarge upon earlier suggestions. With representatives of the various social classes Shakespeare follows his usual plan of inventing only when it is necessary that he do so.

III

Shakespeare's Use of Character Invention When Portraying the Various Dramatic Types

There are in all dramas certain types of personages without which the action of the piece cannot proceed; they belong to the structure, and are necessary figures in the development of the plot; there are likewise certain types of personages which appear often in drama, but are not essential to its structure. In the preceding chapter an effort was made to classify Shakespeare's personages according to their position in the social order, and to determine the dramatist's use of invention with representatives of the various strata; in this chapter it will be necessary to classify the personages of Shakespeare's plays again, but this time according to the part which each plays in the structure of the piece. We shall present these various classes by illustration and discussion, having in mind as before Shakespeare's degree of invention with the several groups.

We find in most dramas a male character who is more important than his fellows, and also a heroine, the most conspicuous woman. Either of these may be the protagonist, about whom the action of the play centers. In *Hamlet* the protagonist is the most important male character; in *As You Like It*, on the other hand, Rosalind is the protagonist. In some dramas, such as *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Macbeth*, the hero and heroine have equally important positions in the structure, and are together protagonists of the piece.

The two opposing forces of good and evil are usually headed by protagonist and "villain." So this latter rôle is added to the list of those which are necessary to the structure of a drama.

There are other types of personages who, though not essential figures, appear again and again in Shakespeare's plays; these are the confidant, or close friend of the hero or heroine; the many types of humorous personages—the fool, the dull constable, the braggart knight; the various moralizing personages, such as those who perform the function of a chorus of comments or criti-

cism; the supernatural personages; the purely mechanical figures, such as the attending servants and the traditional "stage messengers."

There are two points to be determined in regard to the hero: first, whether Shakespeare is more inventive when he is portraying heroes of tragedy, or when he is portraying heroes of comedy; and secondly, whether Shakespeare is more inventive when his hero is protagonist, when he is of less importance than the heroine, or when he is equal to her.

Shakespeare's tragic heroes are not only of noble birth as we have seen above; they are also, as far as personality is concerned, "above the average level of humanity; desire, passion, or will attains in them a terrible force."[1] And then this force carries them to ultimate disaster. They fall because of their character, rather than because of some external force, though such a force may be contributory. These tragic heroes are great and awe-inspiring portrayals. Our question is, Are they Shakespeare's own invention, or did he draw them from some source? Briefly the answer is this—Shakespeare is largely responsible for his great tragic heroes, except in the cases of Antony, Coriolanus, and Brutus; for these latter he followed Plutarch's portrayals closely. The other tragic heroes have prototypes too, but in every case Shakespeare elaborated or changed the original until the figure is his own. The portrayal of the character of Hamlet is a conspicuous example of Shakespeare's power of invention when depicting his heroes of tragedy.

As regards the well-known versions of the Hamlet story, those of Saxo Grammaticus, and Belleforest, the alleged version of Kyd, and that represented in the early German version, we need consider for our purpose only the question: How much and what did Shakespeare owe to any of these?

The Hamlet of the work of Belleforest and of *The Historie of Hamblet*, in order to avenge his father's death, feigns madness, "with such craft and subtill practises, that hee made show how as if hee had utterly lost his wittes."[2] He becomes a freak of nature

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[1] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 20.

[2] *The Historie of Hamblet* in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. II, p. 230.

and greatly overdoes his foolish acts. His "madness" is regarded with suspicion, and he is subjected to various tests. He wins his mother to his side; is later sent to England where he has many experiences; and finally returns to Denmark, and, with the aid of his mother, avenges the death of his father.

In the German play, *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, we find that Hamlet's actions are much the same as they are in Shakespeare's final version of the play, but that his character is quite different. He is not contemplative nor reflective in the German play. The reasons for his delay in avenging his father's murder are external ones, rather than ones resulting from his own personality. The Hamlet of the German play says, for example, "The King is always surrounded by many guards, wherefore it [his play for revenge] may miscarry."[3] No such fear causes Shakespeare's Hamlet to delay his plans; his own temperament is responsible for it. There are some differences in action, but the main ones are in characterization. The interest in *Der Bestrafte Brudermord* lies in plot or action; the interest in Shakespeare's play, in the presentation of character. The character of Hamlet in the nonextant work of Kyd's is probably drawn along the same lines as that in the German play.

In the first quarto of *Hamlet* we have, in all probability, Shakespeare's earliest conception of the character of the Danish Prince. As far as its actions are concerned, the character is fully conceived in the first quarto. But Shakespeare develops its contemplative side, showing in detail the reasons for Hamlet's actions and even the steps in his reasonings. The soliloquies of the later Hamlet are fuller and more effective. The hero of the first quarto, while not really insane, gives more evidence of it than the later one does, so that at times we are confused as to whether he is so, or is merely pretending. There is no such flaw in Shakespeare's later conception of the character of Hamlet. The character of Hamlet as seen in the first quarto version is not as logically developed nor as fully portrayed as it is in the later version.

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[3] *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*, in "A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare," ed. by H. H. Furness, vol. IV, p. 128.

It seems probable that Shakespeare knew the earlier play on the Hamlet theme—very likely the English original of *Der Bestrafte Brudermord*—he may also have known *The Historie of Hamblet;* he gave his earliest version of the story in the first quarto rendition; and he worked it over, paying especial attention to the character of his hero in the later version. The main outline of the action does not differ greatly in the various accounts of the story, but the character of Hamlet undergoes a great elaboration. We have thus not only a development from earlier figures portrayed by other writers, but also a development in Shakespeare's own conception of the character.

In no source that we know do we find the character of Hamlet depicted as it is in Shakespeare's final portrayal. The figure is an original one as far as personality is concerned. We know that the Hamlet of the later version can obey the ghost's injunction to kill his stepfather if he wishes to; there are no physical barriers to his doing so. The reason for his delay lies, as we have noted, in his own temperament, and in the more or less temporary state of excitement consequent upon his having actually seen his father's spirit; Hamlet recognizes these reasons and, in his soliloquies, often denounces himself for putting off the revenge he has planned, as for example,

> "How all occasions do inform against me,
> And spur my dull revenge!"[4]

There is nothing to suggest that Hamlet was delayed by moral scruples either. His slowness of action seems to be caused by his habit of contemplation, of turning a thing over in his mind before acting, and this trait was given to him by Shakespeare. Critics have given many different interpretations of his character. This is not the place to go into them. A comparison of the character of Hamlet as he is in Shakespeare's play with the characters in the earlier accounts of the story makes it clear that the personage created by Shakespeare is the dramatist's own invention and that it owes little in the way of characterization to the sources.

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[4] Act IV, Scene iv.

The tragic heroes: Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Troilus, Othello, Timon, Titus, and the kings of the English chronicle plays are all taken from sources, and elaborated and changed by Shakespeare. Only the Roman heroes: Antony, Brutus, Coriolanus, are depicted in the pages of Shakespeare much as they are in the sources.

The heroes of comedy do not reach the grand proportions of the tragic heroes. They are not, as a rule, obsessed with one great passion, nor overthrown in a conflict with universal laws. They are more ordinary human beings, more normal men. Shakespeare does not lavish as much detail and workmanship on these figures as he does on his heroes of tragedy. In comedy, as a rule, there is more interest in situation than in characterization; the opposite is true in tragedy, so it is only natural that the tragic heroes are greater portrayals.

We find, however, that Shakespeare is highly inventive with his heroes of comedy, even though the finished products are less great than the tragic heroes. He changes and elaborates a source in the cases of all of his heroes of comedy except in *The Tempest*, *Love's Labor's Lost*, and *Much Ado About Nothing* where he invents his heroes entirely. Angelo in *Measure for Measure* is illustrative of a hero elaborated from a source; Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* is illustrative of one completely invented.

Angelo's prototype is Promos in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*. Shakespeare's figure is not unlike Whetstone's in much that he does. Each condemns a man to death for adultery, reviving a former statute in so doing; each falls in love with the sister of the offender and offers to save the man if she will give herself to him, each believes that the sister finally gives in, each is grossly and cruelly deceitful in that he has the condemned man killed in spite of his promise to the contrary. Shakespeare makes changes, however, in the character of his hero; he has Angelo seem to be reluctant to accept the power which is only to be his temporarily, when in reality he is overjoyed at the opportunity of exercising power; his deeds are darker by contrast with his seeming virtue. Promos, on the other hand, was the true head of his realm, and never seemed aught that he was

not. Shakespeare makes Angelo insist on his innocence at the last of the play until he sees that the case is hopeless; Promos, on the contrary, confesses his guilt as soon as he is brought to trial. The later dramatist also changes the unreal ending of *Promos and Cassandra*, in which the hero weds the lady he has wronged in order to make amends to her, and has his hero, instead, marry one to whom he had formerly been betrothed. Shakespeare thus changes and elaborates the character of Promos in making him over into Angelo. He makes him a great deal more dramatic by contrasting his evil, selfish, and cruel nature with his seeming goodness.

With the character of Benedick, Shakespeare is, as far as we know, entirely inventive. The story of Hero and Claudio—undoubtedly the less interesting of the two interwoven plots—has sources in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and in Bandello's Twentieth Story; but no prototypes have been discovered for Benedick and Beatrice. They are, in all probability, Shakespeare's inventions; the witty, intelligent, charming Benedick is an original creation.

From the foregoing it is seen that Shakespeare is inventive with both his heroes of tragedy and his heroes of comedy; he is more inventive in degree only with the tragic heroes.

In the second place, the question arises, Is Shakespeare more inventive when his hero is protagonist, or when he is of equal importance with the heroine, or when he is of less importance? King Lear is a hero who is also the protagonist of the drama called by his name. Shakespeare takes the personage as he found it in *The Chronicle History of King Leir* and makes elaborations and changes. In the older play the hero is a pathetic old man, but he is far from being the living personality that Lear is. "The senile dementia of King Lear is contemptible in itself, but is transformed into an effect of grandeur by his years, his royal dignity, and the pitifulness of his situation."[5] And it is in this that Shakespeare is inventive. Lear is credulous, hasty, foolish, self-willed, but he is every inch a king, and this cannot be said of the hero of *King Leir*. Shakespeare realizes the necessity of

[5] F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama*, vol. I, p. 300.

upholding the dignity of his character through the many indignities that he suffers. Also, Lear is driven insane while the figure in the older play retains his sanity. Shakespeare realizes that he must become insane as a result of the terrible treatment to which he is subjected; the older dramatist does not realize it. Shakespeare brings out the effect of suffering in reviving the sweetness and also the greatness of Lear's character; and the incidents at the end of the play—his solicitude for his faithful Fool, his anguish over his treatment of Cordelia and Kent, his attitude of thoughtfulness toward others—all serve to heighten the effect of the portrayal of this grand and pathetic figure. Shakespeare's royal and commanding personage is in sharp contrast to the patient, resigned king of the earlier play.

Similarly, we find Shakespeare inventive in practically every case when his hero is protagonist; this statement is true also as regards the cases where hero and heroine are of equal importance; where they are together the protagonists of the plays. A consideration of one of these cases will illustrate the point. Romeo and Juliet are both protagonists; if we judge by the title only, it would be evident that the author considered the two of equal importance.

Shakespeare had a very satisfactory source for *Romeo and Juliet;* Arthur Brooke's poem gave him the main outline of his plot, and of most of the characters; yet Shakespeare invents new qualities for these figures and makes them more life-like. In Brooke's poem Romeus is superlatively praised; he is a young man,

> "Whose beauty and whose shape so farre the rest dyd stayne:
> That from the cheefe of Veron youth, he greatest fame dyd gayne."[6]

He is a combination of good qualities rather than an individual. A proof of his unreality lies in his agreement to his friend's suggestion that he give up his love for a girl who does not care for him; one has merely to compare this acquiescence with

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[6] Arthur Brooke, *Romeus and Juliet,* in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. I, p. 77.

Romeo's reply to Benvolio's "Forget to think of her," which is "O! Teach me how I should forget to think,"[7] to see how much more true to life Romeo is than his prototype. As against Brooke's Romeus who sets about finding another to love and who goes willingly to Capulet's feast, we have Romeo's reluctance to do as his friends wish him to do. The exquisite poetry of Romeo's love-making is not found in *Romeus and Juliet.* Another change is made by the dramatist who makes Romeo kill Tybalt because the latter has killed Mercutio, rather than in self defense as Romeus does. Shakespeare also emphasizes certain faults in his hero—a thing that Brooke does not do. He depicts Romeo as being hasty and hot-headed, impulsive, and easily disheartened, all of this in contrast to the calm and steady Juliet. Shakespeare makes another contrast which Brooke does not: he shows very clearly the difference between Romeo at the first of the play when he is merely a youthful dreamer and the Romeo of the later parts, who, transformed by his love for Juliet, begins to act instead of merely dream, and becomes a man as a result of his experiences. Shakespeare thus changes and elaborates his source and leaves an original figure in Romeo.

We find that Shakespeare is inventive when his hero is protagonist or of equal importance to the heroine; on the other hand, we shall see that he is not so inventive with his heroes who are not protagonists. Such a hero is Orlando in *As You Like It.* Rosalind is without doubt, the protagonist of this play, a character of far more importance than the hero. Lodge's novel, *Rosalynde,* is Shakespeare's source for *As You Like It;* Rosader is the prototype of Orlando. The playwright makes a few changes in his figure, and by so doing makes him more true to life, but he does not invent to the degree that he does when his hero is also protagonist. Some of the differences between Orlando and Rosader are as follows: Shakespeare's hero is so overcome by the kindness of Rosalind at the tourney that he can speak no word, whereas his prototype dictates a sonnet to her; then, too, Orlando is not the faint hearted upbraider of destiny, when

[7] Act I, Scene i.

visited with ill fortune, that Rosader is; Orlando is ignorant of the fact that Rosalind has been sent into exile, whereas Rosader knows of it, but does not go to aid her; Orlando is a truer lover than is his prototype; and he is not fierce and cruel to his brother as is Rosader. Shakespeare thus makes his hero a more attractive personage, but he does not make him as conspicuous a figure, as great or as original a creation as is the protagonist of the play.

Shakespeare is inventive to a great degree with his heroes; his heroes of tragedy are his greatest figures, and we find him making these personages more original as well as more outstanding than any of his other creations. Shakespeare is inventive with many of his heroes of comedy, even originating them in some cases, but never lavishing the same wealth of detail upon them that he lavishes on his tragic heroes. We find also that Shakespeare is inventive to a great degree when his hero is the most, or one of the two most important figures in the play, and also that he is not so inventive when his hero is not the protagonist.

Shakespeare is inventive along much the same lines with his heroines; let us consider the same questions in relation to the leading feminine characters. Shakespeare's great skill as an originator of character has been shown above in his use of invention when portraying the figures of Lady Macbeth and of Cordelia and, to some extent, those of Cressida and Cleopatra. In Lady Macbeth, he invents a great personage from a bare suggestion of Holinshed's; in Cordelia, he creates a living figure out of a mere type; in Cressida and Cleopatra, he rings subtle changes which disclose them in a different light. Shakespeare is likewise inventive with Volumnia in *Coriolanus*, although he takes some of her qualities from Plutarch. Volumnia is the mother of Coriolanus, and the leading feminine character in the play. Shakespeare pictures her as less domineering than does Plutarch; he also pictures her as a better and more efficient instructor of her son; Shakespeare's figure pervades the whole story, as Plutarch's does not; and, while the earlier Volumnia makes a forcible speech to her son when he is marching against Rome, it does not compare with the glorious outburst of indignation of Shakespeare's heroine. The two are alike in their patriotism, their love for Coriolanus, and their influence over

him, but the Volumnia of the drama is a far more dominant and powerful personality.

The tragic heroines of Shakespeare's English chronicle plays are taken from the sources with little change; they are not as a rule very great creations, though the passionate motherhood of Constance and the patient suffering of Katharine are not easily forgotten.

Shakespeare's tragic heroines are responsible to some extent for their own overthrow; some act or trait of theirs contributes in every case to the final catastrophe. In most instances Shakespeare is inventive in this respect, as he originates the traits or acts which contribute to the overthrow, as in the case of Lady Macbeth, or he emphasizes them, as in the case of Cordelia.

That Shakespeare is inventive with his heroines of comedy may be seen in many instances. He invents a charming figure from a type, making a number of changes in so doing, in the case of Viola in *Twelfth Night.* The accepted source for this play is Barnabe Riche's *Apolonius and Silla.* Viola's prototype, Silla, is a beautiful girl, the daughter of the governor of Cyprus. She falls deeply in love with Apolonius and feeds "him with such amorous baits as the modesty of a young maid could reasonably afford."[8] But he does not love her, and when he leaves, Silla follows him. After being shipwrecked, she dresses as a page, and becomes servant to Apolonius who sends her with love tokens to his lady. This lady falls in love with Silla, who is imprisoned by her master. After disclosing the fact that she is a woman, Silla weds Apolonius, who suddenly becomes enamoured of her. Shakespeare took something of the story, but nothing of the character, of Viola from this source. The modesty of Shakespeare's heroine is little like the brazen behavior of Silla. Viola is represented as full of admiration for the Duke, and gratitude to him, and she is genuinely distressed when Olivia loves her; she is likewise gentle, sincere, resourceful, but honest; she resorts to no such plot to win the man she loves. She is Shakespeare's own invention.

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[8] Barnabe Riche, *Apolonius and Silla,* in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. I, p. 388.

Shakespeare, in comedy, invents entirely some of his heroines, as he does his heroes. Beatrice, the charming mistress of Benedick, whose personality is a rare combination of wit and playfulness, intelligence and love of joking, loyalty and mockery, is Shakespeare's own invention.

On the whole, Shakespeare is about equally inventive with his heroines of comedy and those of tragedy; as, in his comedies as well as in his tragedies, he invents great figures of women, and in some cases originates them himself. It is true too that Shakespeare is as a rule more inventive with his heroines of comedy than with his heroes.

The second point in regard to the heroines now arises; we shall consider Shakespeare's degree of invention with them when they are protagonists, when they are equal in rank with the hero, and when they are of inferior rank.

Shakespeare is highly inventive with his heroines when they are protagonists; for example, let us take the figure of Rosalind in *As You Like It.* There can be no doubt that Rosalind is the leading character in the play; the action centers about her, and her personality dominates the piece. The Rosalynde of Lodge's novel is a colorless being in comparison with Shakespeare's heroine. This latter is possessed of a spirit of fun and merriment and charm; her wit, her intelligence, her sprightliness are all emphasized by Shakespeare. She is given a more important part in the play and enjoys more preëminence than her prototype does. She is more lovable and more loving in the play; and she departs measurably from the pastoral heroine of Lodge. Here we have a character largely invented by Shakespeare. And this we find to be the case always when his heroine is protagonist, and when she is equal in rank with the hero, too. We have noted above that Shakespeare is inventive with Cleopatra and with Cressida. We find him inventive with Juliet, too; although her story is like Brooke's, Shakespeare is inventive as regards her personality. There is no hint in Shakespeare's heroine of the "wily wench" of Brooke's poem who laughs at fooling her mother, and plans to do so again. In Shakespeare's work also we find that Juliet does not speak to Romeo before he speaks to her, as does her prototype. She is more modest in Shakespeare's work, yet more courageous,

too. Nor does the Juliet of the play hurt Paris by leading him on to love her, so that she may disguise her true feelings; Shakespeare emphasizes the development of her character through her love for Romeo, a fact not brought out by Brooke. Juliet is thus transformed and elaborated by Shakespeare.

When the heroine is of minor importance in the play, she is as a rule not elaborately characterized. The heroine of *Hamlet* is an illustration of such a one; not only is Ophelia subordinate, she is also not as fully drawn as are most of Shakespeare's heroines. There is only the barest suggestion of Ophelia in the earliest versions of the story; if the German drama is Kyd's lost play, Shakespeare probably found the figure of Ophelia there. He takes over her story and some of her traits from that play, but refines his portrayal and makes her infinitely more pathetic. He brings out her insufficiency; yet makes us sympathize with her. She is much the same in the two Shakespearean versions of *Hamlet*, a weak yet pitiable figure.

Shakespeare with his heroines, as with his heroes, is highly inventive when they are important figures, less so when they are subordinate ones.

In most of Shakespeare's dramas, there is a figure who represents the forces of evil. At times he is the hero of the play; more often he opposes the hero, and seeks to do some evil to him; such a person is, in a word, the villain. Richard III is a hero who is also a villain; Iago is a villain who opposes the hero. There is another division which can be recognized also: the villains of tragedy and the villains of comedy.

All of these types are found as a rule in the sources, as they are necessary to the plot; they are generally elaborated and made more distinctive figures by Shakespeare.

In the first soliloquy of Richard Crookback he says, "I am determined to prove a villain,"[9] and he never deviates from this purpose. Richard is only to a certain extent Shakespeare's original portrayal; he is a grander figure than he is in the chronicles; that is, he is pictured on a larger scale; but he remains melodramatic even in Shakespeare's play. He differs also from

[9] Act I, Scene i.

the coarse ruffian of the *True Tragedie of Richard III*. Shakespeare is not as inventive with him as he is with his later hero-villain, Macbeth.

Iago and Goneril and Regan are examples of villains who are opposed to the hero. Iago is, morally speaking, the worst of Shakespeare's villains, both because of the almost incredible cruelty of the man, and because that cruelty is absolutely wanton. Iago has a prototype in the Ensign of Cinthio's tale which is the source of *Othello*, but Shakespeare has given a far more penetrating and dramatic interpretation of the character. Cinthio says outright that Iago is a man of the most depraved nature in the world; Shakespeare on the other hand plays with Iago's own affected honesty, ringing changes on the words "honest Iago" until they carry a truly dramatic import. In Cinthio's tale, the Ensign falls in love with Desdemona, and thus is given a cause for his villainy toward his master. Iago's villainy is "villainy for villainy's sake." Shakespeare's figure is more deeply conceived, more daring, more subtle than his prototype, as well as more cruel. Again, Goneril and Regan are inhuman monsters, all the more evil because the object of their cruelty is their aged and incapable father. They come direct from the old play, *King Leir;* but are elaborated and doubly dyed in wickedness by Shakespeare; however, they follow the outlines of their prototypes.

We shall turn now to comedy where the villain as hero does not occur, and where there is, of course, less opportunity for villainy. Here we find two kinds of villains corresponding with the two types of comedy—serious comedy (if indeed it may be called comedy) such as *Measure for Measure* or *Cymbeline*, and light comedy such as *As You Like It* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The villain of the most serious type of comedy is not as evil generally as the villain of tragedy, but there is more scope for his activity than for that of the villain of light comedy. Such a figure is Iachimo in *Cymbeline*. He has prototypes in the various tales that may have served Shakespeare as source for the story of the wager in *Cymbeline;* but he is changed by Shakespeare. He is a type rather than an individual in the earlier work, but Shakespeare elaborates him in his portrayal. As

regards the villains of light comedy, we find that they are often not very fully drawn nor especially original figures. Examples are Oliver in *As You Like It* who is even less real than he is in the source, and Don John, in *Much Ado About Nothing* who is merely suggested, such being sufficient for the purposes of those sprightly comedies.

We now turn to certain minor figures who, although they are numerous in Shakespeare's plays, are not vitally necessary to the conduct of the drama. The first of these is the group of confidants; Shakespeare is very inventive with this class, adding them if he found no such figures in the sources. Shakespeare either invents entirely or elaborates his sources in his portrayals of confidants. He creates various kinds of confidants: friends, faithful servants, ladies-in-waiting, and others. Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* is an example of a confidante who is a lady-in-waiting, and who is also entirely of Shakespeare's invention.

She discloses to us much of the character of the heroine by the intimate nature of their conversations; and she is also a very real person herself, determined, spirited, strong-willed; she champions the cause of Hermione and remains loyal to her through the long years when the Queen is supposed to be dead. Her passionate loyalty is an excellent foil to the calm and tranquil restraint of Hermione.

Celia in *As You Like It* is an example of the confidante, and friend of the leading character; she is elaborated by Shakespeare from the source. He makes her, in the first place, less important than Rosalind, as opposed to Lodge; also he sends her into exile with her friend of her own accord, and not of necessity as in *Rosalynde*. Celia thus becomes closer to the heroine in Shakespeare, yet subordinate to her too; also, she gains new charm and sweetness in the later work. Horatio in *Hamlet* is confidant to the hero and his friend as well. He is really Shakespeare's creation, although there are friends of the hero's in *The Historie of Hamblet* who have, however, no personality; and there is a light sketch of such a character in the German play; but Shakespeare owes little to these sources.

The nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* is an example of the servant

confidante; she is Juliet's friend because the young girl has no other to whom she can turn for help. As has been seen, the dramatist elaborates her from a prototype in Brooke's poem. Shakespeare is thus seen to be very original with this group.

Shakespeare introduces humorous personages in practically all of his plays, whether comedy or tragedy; these fall into two groups, the figures of high comedy and the figures of low comedy. The dramatist is inventive with both classes; Shakespeare's humorous figures are hardly ever mere combinations of qualities; they are individuals endowed with personalities of their own. Beatrice and Benedick, Rosaline and Berowne, Mercutio and Gratiano are examples of Shakespeare's originality in personages of high comedy. They are witty rather than humorous; there is little buffoonery or coarseness in the mirth which they provoke. They are possessed of charm and intelligence as well as wit. They are, in most cases, entirely invented by Shakespeare; occasionally they are elaborated from the source.

We have seen how highly inventive Shakespeare is with personages of low comedy; clowns, grave-diggers, constables, drunken knights, and others are for the most part original, owing their existence to no source.

Shakespeare often introduces into his dramas personages who, for want of a better term, we may call the moralizers. These figures comment upon life in general, and often particularly upon the lives of the main figures. They are frequently set apart from the main action of the play, and have little part in the plot. They are drawn from various walks of life, but we recognize them when we meet them, as there is a certain resemblance between the representatives of this group. Shakespeare is highly inventive with these personages, usually elaborating them from a source, and giving them a new function in the play.

This group may be divided into various classes: first, the personages who have been compared in function by Dr. F. E. Schelling somewhat to the horizon-line in a landscape by means of which the proportions of the picture and the perspective are preserved, and through whom we are kept straight in the play as to the relations and standards of the personages; secondly, the malcontents; thirdly, the churlish moralizers; and finally, some of the professional fools.

An excellent example of the first of these is the Bastard, Philip Falconbridge, in *King John;* although the Bastard appears in the source of the play, he is largely Shakespeare's creation. The later dramatist is entirely responsible for making him a "character of comment," and gives him a much more important part in the play, as he appears in more scenes in *King John* than the hero himself does. Shakespeare also omits the terrible scene from the earlier play where the Bastard threatens his mother, and the ribald one where he discovers the debauchery of the monks. Shakespeare, likewise, does not make the Bastard the lover of Blanch, John's young niece, as he makes his character a mocker at love, not a participant in that aspect of the play. Shakespeare's figure is also a moralizer which his prototype is not; he is more attractive, more witty, more individual than the earlier personage, and he is also a more consistent character. Other examples of such personages are Enobarbus in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and Horatio in *Hamlet*, both of whom are, as we have seen, largely Shakespeare's inventions.

Illustrative of the malcontents—those people out of sympathy with the world and preferring satirical comment to action—is Jaques in *As You Like It.* Hazlitt in his *Characters in Shakespeare's Plays* calls Jaques "the only purely contemplative character in Shakespeare."[10] He is entirely of Shakespeare's invention.

We find examples of the personages whose function is satirical comment in Apemantus in *Timon of Athens*, and Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida.* These figures function chiefly as chorus characters who comment upon the personages and the action of the play; and while they are displeased with the world and disgusted with their fellowmen and present a warped rather than a true attitude toward things, yet, at the same time, they disclose much of the truth, and their views cannot be totally disregarded.

Apemantus (who, it is true, may not be entirely Shakespeare's creation) is a bitter commentator on life, and his view of life is of course one-sided. His character is suggested in Plutarch's *Lives* and in Painter's *Palace of Pleasure;* and Shakespeare

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[10] Hazlitt, *Characters in Shakespeare's Plays*, p. 215.

may not have been unacquainted with the account of the cynic philosopher in Lucian's *Philosophies for Sale*. But Apemantus is changed and elaborated.

Thersites, on the other hand, seems wholly Shakespeare's invention. Even though the dramatist read in a translation of the *Iliad* that Thersites was "the filthiest fellow among the Greeks of Troy," he develops the suggestion to such an extent that the character becomes his own. Thersites comments on all the Greek leaders, and on other personages too, and although he does it in the most scurrilous and coarse language imaginable, there is pungent truth in everything he says. He has been well called the "Satyr chorus" of *Troilus and Cressida*.

Some of the fools in Shakespeare play the moralizer as well as the provoker of mirth; they will be considered here only in the moralizing aspect. Illustrative of this kind of character are Lear's Fool and Touchstone, both entirely invented by Shakespeare. Kent remarks of Lear's Fool, "This is not altogether fool,"[11] when he is moralizing to his master about the folly of giving his possessions away. The Fool's running comment on the conduct of Lear is not that of the normal man, but there is searching truth again and again in what he says. Touchstone is like Lear's Fool in his faithfulness to those he serves and in his fondness for moralizing. Touchstone has been called "a mixture of the ancient cynic philosopher and the modern buffoon." He jokes often, and there are moments of boisterous comedy, but there are moments too when Touchstone converses wisely on men and affairs. It is one of the merits of Shakespeare's art that, whereas the earlier fool is lugged in chiefly for diversion, Shakespeare makes these personages of satirical comment on life and manners an integral part of his play, showing in them to the full his inventive originality.

These moralizing characters have a definite place in the plays; they are dramatic and well drawn; they are individual, and they are Shakespeare's own creations.

There is another group of characters with which Shakespeare is again extremely inventive: this is the group of supernatural

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[11] Act I, Scene iv.

beings which we find in some of the plays. There are various kinds of supernatural beings in Shakespeare's plays: there are the fairies, the charming creatures of *Midsummer Night's Dream;* tiny beings who reflect the foibles and follies of humanity; secondly, there are the witches, embodiments of the supernatural element in the temptation of Macbeth; thirdly, there are the ghosts, a holdover from Senecan drama, which appear usually to incite or to heighten revenge; and finally, there are the beings, Ariel and Caliban, in *The Tempest* who fall into no definite category, and will be considered separately.

Shakespeare is highly inventive with all varieties of supernatural beings; he is all but entirely responsible for the fairies as we have them; and for Ariel and Caliban; and he owes little beyond suggestion for his witches and his ghosts.

Charles Lamb has expressed the opinion that "Shakespeare invented the fairies," and the statement is justified, if a consideration is made of the dainty beings of *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the sources which have been suggested for them. That Shakespeare worked on the basis of the accepted folklore of the English countryside is not to be denied. A race of supernatural beings, dwelling in the open spaces, apart from mankind, yet interested in him, and meddling on occasions in human affairs—all this Shakespeare knew and employed. For the portrayal of Puck, Shakespeare owes suggestions to the Robin Goodfellow of this English folklore, of whom Scot in his *Discovery of Witchcraft*, tells us that he played many tricks on housewives. We hear of him also in *Newes out of Purgatory* where he is described as "famous . . . for his mad, merry pranks," and in Nash's *Terrors of the Night*, and in a score of other places. Moreover, fairies had appeared on the stage before Shakespeare's plays, notably in Greene's *History of James IV*, where even the name of Oberon for a fairy occurs. But, in spite of all these facts, the fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream* are original creations. They owe little to the sprites of English folklore, and next to nothing to the fairies of Greene's play. Their daintiness, their diminutiveness, their relation to nature, all these things are Shakespeare's own. The dramatist adds to these qualities the passions of human beings; and not least among the

charms of Oberon and Titania especially are their very human jealousy, indignation, desire for revenge. Even Puck, the jester and scorner of humanity, feels pity for Hermia as she lies alone "on the dark and dirty ground." We may agree then that Shakespeare, in spite of his debt to English folklore, "invented" the fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, combining in happy fashion the supernatural and the natural.

The witches in *Macbeth* are other examples of Shakespeare's transformation of the supernatural. It must be noted, before discussing these figures, that *Macbeth* exists in a corrupt text, possibly shortened for acting purposes. Some of the witch scenes are interpolated from Thomas Middleton's play, *The Witch*, and there is a confusion of ancient mythology and Northern witch lore. But it is easy to tell which parts are non-Shakespearean, as there is a definite contrast in metre, as well as in language and sentiment between the two parts. The figure of Hecate in our text seems entirely taken from *The Witch*, and so has no part in this discussion. The Shakespearean figures are suggested by Holinshed who describes them as "three women in strange and wild apparel, resembling creatures of an elder world; . . . afterward the common opinion was that these women were either the weird sisters, that is the goddesses of destiny, or else some nymphs or fairies, endowed with knowledge of prophecy."[12] Shakespeare likewise takes the several prophecies of the witches from Holinshed, although he does not follow his source in assigning to another witch the misleading prediction that Macbeth would never be slain by man born of woman, nor vanquished till Birnam wood should come to Dunsinane. To Holinshed, then, Shakespeare owes the suggestion that supernatural beings influence Macbeth, but do not force him; in both chronicle and play he is a free agent, not a man driven on by relentless fate. Shakespeare must have been steeped in the witchlore of his time, whether derived from books or tradition, and there it was that he found telling characteristics with which he endows his terrible figures. It was the commonly accepted idea that witches were

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[12] Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. II, pp. 158–159.

old, bearded, hideous, spiteful, endowed with supernatural powers. Shakespeare elaborates upon these ideas, making his figures more vivid than Holinshed's, more effective than those of popular lore. He dignified these creatures of evil to supernatural agencies pervading human life, and deepened the weirdness and mystery and horror of the drama.

Shakespeare has presented in his plays two types of ghosts: the ghost which has a real personality and which takes part in the action, and the ghost which is merely a product of the imagination of some character. There is, however, some danger of one's making too much of this distinction. The ghost was a popular figure in Elizabethan drama, an inheritance from Senecan tragedy, and from native tradition as well. In the works of Kyd we find the Senecan ghost which serves as chorus, explains events, comments on the characters, and which combines with its function as chorus especially the quality of vengeance. The Elizabethans likewise inherited from the middle ages the ghost of native tradition. This popular ghost-lore accepted among other notions the belief that the ghosts of criminals, suicides, or murdered persons walked the earth after death, that they even, at times, entered into compacts with the living, that they appeared usually at midnight, and that at their approach the lights grew dim.

Shakespeare's ghosts exhibit a finer psychology and insight than this. The ghost of Hamlet, King of Denmark, is a striking example of a ghost possessed of so real an individuality that he seems human as well as supernatural. He "brings his dignity, his kingship, his courtesy, his compassion back with him from the world beyond."[13] Like the Senecan ghost, he urges revenge; like the traditional English ghost and Senecan ghost alike, he appears at midnight. There is no ghost in the earliest versions of the Hamlet story, and Shakespeare's ghost differs from that in the German play, *Der Bestrafte Brudemord*, in that he urges Hamlet to spare his mother, and in that he has a larger part in the play. Shakespeare added character, a vital part in the play,

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[13] F. E. Schelling, *Summer Ghosts and Winter Topics*, p. 118.

humanity, and a fine dignity to his conception of "the Majesty of buried Denmark."

The ghosts that appear to Richard III in the evening, before he meets his death, prophesying his defeat and death, are mere figments of the imagination. They are thus, to some extent, like the Senecan ghosts of revenge; there may be a suggestion of native tradition here too, as "the lights burn blue" after they have disappeared. They are suggested in Holinshed and in *The True Tragedie of Richard III*, as Richard mentions his dream; but they actually appear in Shakespeare's drama. They have no personality of their own, but they do have a small part in the play in that they disturb Richard on the eve of battle. They are effective and dramatic creations.

The supernatural characters in *The Tempest* seem wholly of Shakespeare's invention. Ariel may have received his name from the Bible,[14] but his personality was given him by Shakespeare. This charming, wistful, obedient messenger of Prospero is a being of the air; he longs for nothing except a restoration of that freedom which he is denied, and he seeks it as reward for his service. He has some human emotions, as many of Shakespeare's supernatural beings have; his sympathy for the right, his fondness for sport, his ability to reason, all are human attributes; but he is immortal too. He is not definitely described, and it is better so, as this vagueness of outline adds to the charm of this fascinating figure.

The monster Caliban is another of these figures; he is the antithesis of Ariel. He also is servant to Prospero, but he hates his master and rebels against him; sloth, malice, grossness are his outstanding qualities. He has understanding, but no morals. He has been described as a creature midway between beast and man. And yet Caliban's affinity to nature, as Dr. Furness long since observed, is evident in the beauty of his language; he seems more primitive than mankind, he would perhaps have been in a better way if he had not had to associate with man; for, true to universal experience, the contact of primitive savagery with the control of civilization is destructive of the best

[14] The name, Ariel, appears in Isaiah XXIX, 1, and in Ezra VIII, 16.

in savage life. We may thus affirm that Shakespeare is highly original with these supernatural figures, inventing many of them outright, and owing little to his sources in any case.

There are some figures in Shakespeare's plays who are important as regards the plot, but are not conspicuous in characterization. They function mechanically to carry on the action, and have, therefore, little individuality. To this group belong the many minor courtiers and soldiers of the chronicle plays, the numerous followers of the major characters in the Roman plays, the attendants, servants, messengers—all of whom have a function to perform, but who are in no way memorable figures. Shakespeare, as a rule, is not inventive with this group; he takes them from the sources and makes few modifications. Occasionally, however, Shakespeare will give a brief flash of characterization to such a figure. For example, there is a boy in *Much Ado About Nothing* whom Benedick sends for a book, with the injunction that he bring it hither; the boy replies, "I am here already, Sir."[15] Here is a palpable hint of a pert, quick, impudent boy. We do not see him again. In most cases, such characters merely introduce us to more important ones, link the action, perform some necessary deed, report some event offstage, but remain essentially unknown and unnoticeable, exactly as in life.

There are, besides the various classes of characters just discussed, two groups which Shakespeare sometimes brings into his plays and which may here be briefly discussed. Consideration of the varieties of Shakespeare's characters would be incomplete without a discussion of Shakespeare's children and Shakespeare's mob.

Shakespeare portrays children in several of his plays. Although he never gives us a very full or elaborate picture, he often succeeds in leaving a vivid and attractive impression. He introduces children into his plays for various dramatic purposes; as part of the plot in the case of Arthur in *King John;* for the purpose of heightening the pathos as in the case of Macduff's son in *Macbeth;* for mere humor's sake, as Falstaff's page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *2 King Henry IV;* to enhance

[15] Act II, Scene, iii.

the dramatic and poetic effect of a scene, as in the introduction of Coriolanus' young son, Marcius, into the drama. Shakespeare is inventive with all of these figures and in various degrees; although he does not go nicely into detail, the figures are nevertheless memorable and original.

Prince Arthur of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* is older than Shakespeare's pathetic child. He is a young man, worldly wise and possessed of a knowledge of statecraft, an aspiring prince, pressing his claim to the throne. Shakespeare makes Arthur a child used by France to push her claims, and by his mother, Constance, to satisfy her ambitions. He is more passive, more pathetic in Shakespeare, as a result of being more a child. In the source he wins his freedom from his guardian by an appeal to the latter's reason; in Shakespeare, by an appeal to his sympathy. Arthur is a necessary part of the plot in both plays, but is a much more attractive figure in Shakespeare's. The character as we know it is largely the later dramatist's.

Shakespeare puts on the stage the scene in which Macduff's little son is killed. Holinshed states merely that Macbeth has Macduff's wife and children slain. Shakespeare, by presenting the little boy to us, makes the murder more dramatic, as our sympathy for the child is aroused. The brave and loyal little fellow trying to comfort his mother, and then defending his father's honor, and dying for doing so, is an unforgettable picture.

Shakespeare invents entirely the sketch of Falstaff's page—a foil to his portly master; the page is small, pert, witty, loyal. He contributes his bit to the humor of the plays in which he appears.

The son of Coriolanus is one of the most attractive of the children in Shakespeare's plays. His grandmother introduces him to us in these words, "He had rather see the swords and hear a drum, than look upon his schoolmaster;" and Valeria, a friend, contributes this picture, "O' my word, the father's son; I'll swear 'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I looked upon him o' Wednesday half an hour together: he has such a confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and

over he comes and up again; catched it again; or whether his fall enraged him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it; O! I warrant, how he mammocked it!"[16] We meet him again when he goes to meet his father who is marching against Rome, and echoing his grandmother and mother says,

> "A' shall not tread on me:
> I'll run away till I am bigger; but then I'll fight."[17]

Marcius is a thorough boy; the portrayal is vivid, though brief; he is Shakespeare's own invention, as Plutarch merely mentions the "children of Coriolanus" on two or three occasions. Shakespeare gives life to the portrayal.

In these original pictures of children in Shakespeare's plays, we have another and a striking example of his versatility as an inventor of character.

Shakespeare is original also in his portrayals of the mob; indeed his is a treatment of it so peculiarly his own that some critics have felt themselves able to trace his hand in parts of a play of unknown authorship—*Sir Thomas More*—on account of the similarity in the treatment of the mob in this play and in other plays undoubtedly by Shakespeare. The mob as a group is portrayed most fully in *Julius Caesar* and in *Coriolanus*. In such treatment, little account is given of the several members which make up the crowd, although Shakespeare does depict his mob by means of the individual.

In *Julius Caesar* we meet the mob on several occasions: first, as it is rejoicing at Caesar's triumphal return to Rome, again as it listens to Brutus' oration about the necessity of the murder of Caesar; and again in the occasion of Antony's famous oration which succeeds in swaying the mob to his side. In Plutarch's *Lives*, this group is also characterized as a whole; the biographer writes, "all the people together made an outcry of joy" when Caesar refused the crown, and later when Brutus speaks to him they "gave him such audience that it seemed they neither greatly reproved nor allowed the fact, for by their great silence they showed they were sorry for Caesar's death, and also they did

[16] Act I, Scene iii.
[17] Act V, Scene iii.

reverence Brutus"; and later when they hear from Antony of Caesar's will, they rush to burn the "traitor's" houses. Shakespeare, in general, follows the outline of action as given by Plutarch, but he adds much to the characterization of the mob. He emphasizes its fickleness, its lack of reason, its determination when convinced, its ruthlessness in anger. He brings out also the fact that the mob is not essentially evil; it is rather unthinking, stupid, the prey of any demagogue, the lover of flattery.

Much the same picture is that in *Coriolanus;* in which Shakespeare again follows Plutarch for action, but throws a slightly different light on characterization. The mob is again childish, near-sighted, simple, blundering. Shakespeare's pictures of this group are original in many ways; though he follows his source for action, he is highly inventive in his portrayals of mass humanity.

Shakespeare appears most unmistakably the supreme inventor of memorable personages when we call to mind how many and how various are the types of personages of which we can affirm that his art has remade and transformed them. Hero, heroine, villain, confidant, clown, philosopher, supernatural being—with all of these is Shakespeare inventive. He originates, elaborates, changes, until the creations are his own. With his major characters, hero and heroine, he gives fuller portrayals, but he leaves unforgettable pictures in his humorous and meditative and moralizing characters as well. We find him inventive too in the portrayal of children and in depicting the traits of a mob; only with those minor figures whose function is chiefly mechanical do we find this supremely original artist less concerned to use his inventive power. He takes types of characters which have long been considered necessary to the structure of drama, and others, long used as subsidiary figures; but his debt to his sources, direct or indirect, is small in comparison with his originality.

IV

Shakespeare's Use of Character Invention in the Several Periods of His Dramatic Career, and with the Various Types of Plays

The ability of Shakespeare as a playwright increased as he progressed in dramatic experience. There is a steady advance in his power to portray character, in the construction of plot, in style, language, and versification. Shakespeare comes gradually, but surely, into his own, and once he has reached the position of supremacy, he retains it to the end of his career. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: first, to determine whether or not Shakespeare became more inventive in characterization as he progressed in dramatic experience, and secondly, to determine whether he is most inventive with the personages of tragedy, of comedy, or of chronicle play. A consideration of Shakespeare's inventiveness in the various periods of his activity shows his steadily increasing power as an inventor of personages.

In his earliest work, say to 1594, Shakespeare was influenced in characterization largely by the works of other writers; and he follows his direct sources more closely here than at any other period of his career. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, for example, the personages bear often the stamp of Lyly. His influence is felt both in the several comic types, and in the courtiers as well. There is a flash of originality, a brief forecast of great figures to follow, however, in the characters of Rosaline and Berowne, both witty, scornful of love, fond of jests, charming.

In *The Comedy of Errors* Shakespeare follows his source, the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, both for specific personages and also for types. He takes the two main personages, Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse, from the two Menaechmi of Plautus' play; while Dromio of Ephesus, although he has no original in the source, is nevertheless a Plautine type, and can hardly be called Shakespeare's invention. The only figures which are wholly original are Solinus, the Duke of Ephesus, who appears merely as a benevolent arbiter and upholder of the law;

Emilia, dignified and kind, and joyous in the end at the reunion with her sons and husband; and Luciana, spirited, loyal, attractive—the most original figure in the play. Again, in the early chronicle plays, Shakespeare follows his sources closely, inventing wholly but few figures, elaborating little upon the personages of his sources.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, on the other hand, Shakespeare is more inventive, and also more creative of vivid characters. This tragedy seems to mark a transition from the earliest to the next period of Shakespeare's dramatic career, as, although it has many marks of early work, it nevertheless bears promise of Shakespeare's later originality in the conception of character. For, while he takes the outlines of most of these figures from Brooke's poem, *Romeus and Juliet*, he nevertheless gives new qualities to many of them, makes their actions more rational and more logical, elaborates suggestions in the source, and even invents several new personages with distinct individualities of their own.

Shakespeare progresses in inventiveness during this earliest period of his writing; but even in the best work of that time, he is still influenced by others, and the personages in his plays are not very different after all from their prototypes.

During the second or "romantic" period, that extending to say 1600, we find Shakespeare progressing steadily along the lines of characterization and originality. The personages of the comedies and chronicle plays of this period are, many of them, wholly Shakespeare's own. For the comedies he draws upon earlier romances for his plots—romances both Italian and English —but many of the personages are invented in whole or in part by the dramatist. Examples of this are most of the added traits of the lovely fairies of *Midsummer Night's Dream;* in very different kind, the splendid portrait of the Countess of Rousillon in *All's Well that Ends Well;* and in a smaller degree the elaboration of the personalities of Katharine and Petruchio in *The Taming of the Shrew.* In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare invents almost entirely the vivacious pair, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, also "Sweet Anne Page" and her contrasted suitors, as well as Falstaff and other comic figures. In *The Merchant of Venice*, the lovely figure of Portia is wholly the

dramatist's, as are the splendid portrayal of Shylock, the comic characters of Lancelot Gobbo and his father, and others of great interest. In the three splendid plays: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare is highly inventive with his personages. He uses all methods of invention in these plays. For example, he originates entirely, as we have noted, the memorable figures of Beatrice and Benedick, also the comic figures of Malvolio, Feste, and Maria in *Twelfth Night*, and of Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado*, and the "melancholy" Jaques in *As You Like It*. He often elaborates a bare outline in the source, or makes over a type into a real personality; as for example, in the portrayals of Rosalind and Orlando, Viola and Orsino.

In the chronicle plays of the period, we find Shakespeare inventive with many varieties of figures too; here belongs the greatest of his comic creations, Sir John Falstaff. Here belong also the companions that make up Falstaff's court, and the inimitable Shallow and Silence. Shakespeare has elaborated the figures found in the source in the case of many of his characters—notably Henry IV, Henry V, Katharine, and adapted his source to create the hasty, voluble Hotspur.

In a word, in this second period of his writing, Shakespeare has progressed to the point at which he dares to throw aside any influence of other writers that appears in any way to interfere with his art, and where, in consequence, he uses his sources mainly for suggestion and no longer slavishly. The characters in these last comedies are Shakespeare's own.

In the succeeding period, that of the great tragedies, Shakespeare rises to the creation of his greatest and most original personages. In these plays particularly, "the inventive power of the poet produces the artistic appearance of a rich individual life, because he has so put together a few vital expressions of a person—comparatively few—that the person, understood and felt by him as a unity is intelligible to the actor and to the spectator as a characteristic being."[1]

It is difficult to conceive of Shakespeare as transcending the

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[1] G. Freytag, *The Technique of the Drama*, p. 249.

inventive ingenuity which he displays in such comedies as *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*, but in the period of the tragedies he achieved even a higher originality; first, he creates personages in fuller detail and in a more elaborate manner, and secondly, he widens the scope of his invented personages, and depicts many varieties of characters. For here is the deadly, cowardly Macbeth, the meditative Hamlet, the senile, headstrong old King Lear, the vacillating Antony, the proud Coriolanus; and the variety of his heroines is almost as great; Desdemona, innocent, a sufferer, but obtuse as to her terrible lord; Lady Macbeth, pitiless, terrible, softened somewhat by her infatuation for her husband; lovely, piteous Cordelia; all-fascinating Cleopatra; Cressida, the faithless wanton; Volumnia, haughtier mother of a haughty son. The villains too are here depicted with skill and inventiveness—Iago, Goneril, Regan, Claudius; as are also the various moralizing figures: Enobarbus, Thersites, Lear's fool; the supernatural beings, the witches and ghosts; all to a degree not hitherto discernible are Shakespeare's inventions. Figures of comedy are, of course, incidental to the tragedies, and, in the few that occur, Shakespeare seems less inventive than in like personages of earlier writing. Yet even in the tragedies we find occasional vivid, though brief, portrayals of comic figures, the clown in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, to name no more.

In the final period of Shakespeare's dramatic career there is no falling off in inventive skill, although a change is discernible in the type of drama which he writes—tragicomedies succeeding the great tragedies. We shall not consider the question as to whether Shakespeare's art here partially failed him, as our concern is merely with the measure of his inventive originality. A mere mention of such personages as Hermione, Perdita, and Miranda; the villain, Iachimo; the confidante, Paulina; the humorous figures, Autolycus, Trinculo, and Stephano; the supernatural beings, Ariel and Caliban should sufficiently put to rest any idea that in this part of his career Shakespeare's originality in characterization had to any degree deserted him. Shakespeare departs from his sources in large measure in *The Winter's Tale* and in *Cymbeline;* and invents entirely the per-

sonages in *The Tempest*. Here is surely no falling off in inventive skill, and, in this particular at least, we may confidently deny any influence of Fletcher as dominating Shakespeare.

The second question proposed for discussion in this chapter concerns Shakespeare's use of character invention in the three types of drama: tragedy, comedy, chronicle play. There is a connection between this problem and the one discussed above, as the playwright was absorbed with different types of drama in the several periods of his career. It is necessary first to attempt to determine if there is anything intrinsic in the nature of any one of these dramatic types which would lead to a greater inventiveness in one case as above the others.

As the chief interest in tragedy lies in character, a greater degree of individuality in characterization is needed. In comedy, on the other hand, the interest is more usually in situation. In tragedy, a large part of the action results from the personality of the hero; in comedy, however, external events play an important part in determining the final outcome. In *Othello* for instance, the tragic *dénouement* is largely the result of the personality of the hero,

> "—one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
> Perplexed in the extreme."[2]

Iago's malevolent plotting would have failed had he practised it on a nature other than Othello's. The personality of Iago is likewise extremely potent in determining the events; his seeming "honesty" linked to his cruel and unscrupulous nature is in part responsible for the tragedy. In this drama, action results from character. On the other hand, take for example, *The Comedy of Errors* or even *Twelfth Night*. In the first, external events determine the action; there is little interest in characterization; the persons are mere types. The comedy does not result from the personality of the two brothers, but from their similarity in appearance and the consequent confusion to everyone concerned. In *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare portrays several interest-

[2] Act V, Scene ii.

ing and original figures, but the action, even here, results from external events rather than from the personality of Viola. The main interest is thus in situation rather than in character.

In his tragedies, Shakespeare "brings before us a considerable number of persons, but it is preëminently the story of one person, the hero, or at most of two, the hero and heroine."[3] These characters must be drawn with great care, must be perfectly clear, must be logical in their acts, as "the center of the tragedy . . . lies in action issuing from character, or in character issuing in action."[4] The personality of the main figures must be distinguished, and, if this is not the case in the sources, then Shakespeare must elaborate, change, and accentuate, and this he does. From these main characters "beams the color, the warmth, the light, upon the accessory figures."[5] These secondary characters must be in keeping with the more important ones, in order to maintain unity of impression, and this is true in Shakespeare's tragedies. The great figures of Horatio, Enobarbus, Kent, Lear's Fool, Iago, Cordelia, Desdemona, and many others are witnesses to the fact.

In comedy, on the other hand, the interest lies in situation mainly; and we should be amused at the various events no matter what kind of characters was involved. For instance, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the situation is a comic one, as has been noted. The ridiculous plight of Sir John would be comic in any event; Shakespeare makes it doubly so, however, by creating a figure like Falstaff to be the protagonist; and he likewise makes the situation more pleasing by giving to the two women concerned such vivacious personalities. Shakespeare, in this as well as other plays, is inventive in comedy, much more so than is necessary in that kind of drama, but not so inventive as he is in tragedy.

In chronicle plays, novel characterization is even less demanded. The historical dramas present a panorama—a period of history, rather than a detailed characterization of personages. In dramas which deal with historical heroes, more attention is

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[3] A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy*, p. 7.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 12.
[5] G. Freytag, *The Technique of the Drama*, p. 251.

given to action than to characterization; the events do not so rigidly follow of necessity from the personality of the hero. Then, too, the author must follow to some extent the historical events as they actually occurred, and thus a further limitation is placed upon his invention. The author of a chronicle play faces a difficult task, as he must make certain changes in historical events and figures, and yet he must not change too radically the true condition of affairs. As a result of the great interest in action and the necessity of following history to some extent, a writer cannot be as inventive in characterization with the figures of chronicle play as he is with those in other types of drama. Shakespeare draws some splendid figures in his chronicle plays, for example, Richard II and the Bastard Falconbridge; but perforce, he follows his sources more closely there than elsewhere.

From the foregoing discussion, we may determine that tragedy does demand a higher degree of inventiveness in character than do other dramatic forms. It is significant that at the period when Shakespeare wrote his tragedies, he had attained his greatest skill in the dramatic delineation of character.

V

Minor Considerations concerning Shakespeare's Invented Personages

It has been our concern in the preceding chapters of this dissertation to present Shakespeare as an inventor of dramatic personages. In the accomplishment of this objective, we have discussed the dramatist's purpose in inventing characters, his methods in so doing, and the degree of his originality with various groups of personages. It is the purpose of this chapter to bring up for brief discussion certain minor considerations which have a bearing on Shakespeare's inventiveness, and which may aid in bringing more clearly before us his genius as an originator of personages.

Foremost is the question, Does Shakespeare show most power of invention when his sources are chronicles, or when they are biographies, or when they are romances, or when they are plays? In brief, the answer is, Shakespeare is most inventive when his source is most inadequate, regardless of the type of literature to which it belongs. Even when Shakespeare was at the height of his dramatic career, he followed a source closely if it was a good one; the specific literary piece determined in each case his degree of invention.

When Holinshed's *Chronicles*, for example, served Shakespeare as source, the dramatist was often very inventive, as has been noted, but the reason for this is not so much because the chronicle as a literary type is inadequate as a source for drama, as because this particular work is an especially bare record of events and devotes little space to characterization.

In contrast to Holinshed, when Shakespeare employs Plutarch's admirable *Lives* as a source for drama, he invents little, as, in this case, "the narration of historical incident goes everywhere hand in hand with the true spirit of humanism and the deepest sense of resistless destiny,"[1] and Plutarch is occupied

[1] Tucker Brooke, *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, vol. II, p. XIII.

with character and personality. It is obvious that biography is more devoted to characterization than is chronicle, and, in the case of Plutarch's work, the author is particularly interested in this aspect of his work; while, in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, he is interested simply in giving an account of events.

When Shakespeare uses romances for sources, he again invents much if the source is unsatisfactory, and little if it is adequate. For example, in drawing upon *Apolonius and Silla* as source for *Twelfth Night*, he makes many changes in action, and characterization alike, and retains only the bare outline of the story in his drama. Most of the Italian romances are tales of intrigue and passion, and require many changes when they are transformed into drama. On the other hand, the romance of *Pandosto* by Greene is a satisfactory source for *The Winter's Tale*, and Shakespeare makes comparatively few changes.

Shakespeare employs this same manner of treatment when he uses plays as sources. In general, he takes the outline of the story from the play, but he elaborates the figures of the earlier work into original and dramatic personages. If the early play is satisfactory, he follows it rather closely, as when he draws upon *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* as source for *King John*. If, on the other hand, the source is inadequate as is the old play, *King Leir*, Shakespeare strengthens the plot, and elaborates the personages, and invents entirely certain others.

In the few instances in which Shakespeare's source is a narrative poem, he invents according to the need of the specific work, following Arthur Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet* rather closely, or wholly recasting Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, so far as Chaucer may be considered here an actual source.

An interesting query has of late attracted much interest; that is, To what degree, if any, did the personnel and organization of Shakespeare's company of actors affect the characterization of his plays?[2] A detailed discussion of the personnel and type of organization of the Shakespearean company is not pertinent here. But it is, perhaps, not irrelevant to consider some

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[2] See T. W. Baldwin, *The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company.*

of the circumstances which concern Shakespeare's relations to the company which he served as shareholder, actor, and author. It was doubtless a condition of this association that certain parts must be written to conform more or less to the abilities and even the limitations of the actors who were to take them. The personnel of the company, of course, changed during the twenty or more years of Shakespeare's association with it, and these changes are reflected, it is believed, in his plays. For example, as the number of members increases, so also the number of rôles in the plays has been found to increase. Or again, as one type of actor replaces another, we can note certain changes in the plays; an illustration of this has been suggested in the change, about 1599, in Shakespeare's type of comic figure from the buffoon, such as Dogberry or Shallow to the satiric court jester, such as Touchstone or Feste; a change which corresponds to the succession in the company of the low comedian, Will Kemp, by the high comedian, Robert Armin. Shakespeare, in a word, according to Baldwin's idea, adapted the rôles of his plays to the personnel of his company. As to this matter, we may agree that Shakespeare might readily recognize the fitness of Burbage for dignified and serious characters, or Armin's forte in his comic rôles, and adapt his creations to these, and other personal characteristics. But it may be doubted if such circumstances could have much bearing on the degree of invention employed by the dramatist in any given case. It would seem reasonable to believe that this is determined, all but wholly, by the difference between the characters and their prototypes in the sources. If we consider the personages entirely invented by Shakespeare, we may note that the personnel of the company may have suggested the type to Shakespeare; but that it had little or no influence on the full portrayal, we may well accept.

A third question arises—To what extent, if any, have the personal characteristics of Shakespeare influenced the personages which he has invented? The range, diversity, and originality of Shakespearean invention is ample proof that the great dramatist rose above that petty repetition of his own personality that is the limitation of lesser men. In a sense, every characteristic of Shakespeare affected the personages which he invented.

There are, however, several which seem especially likely to have affected his inventive skill, and which may be briefly considered. Shakespeare is so capable of losing himself in his work, so objective, that it is never safe to label personages as mere exponents of his feelings. This is true even of the moralizing personages; it is Hamlet not Shakespeare who says, "To be or not to be, that is the question," and Jaques, not the dramatist, who says "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Shakespeare did not look at life "through learned classical glasses," and, as a result, produce types such as are found often in Jonson and his imitators. Shakespeare's is the drama of reality, not a stilted thing; and his personages, instead of being modelled after recipes for the drawing of dramatic personages, are true to life. It is a commonplace that Shakespeare held at nought most of the classical rules of the drama, and his creations are more real as a result. The dramatist, in most of his plays, disregarded anything that tended to cast his characters into molds, practising a perfect freedom in his inventions. Examples of the lack of originality in characterization among the dramatists who blindly follow classical examples are not far to seek; even in Shakespeare's own *Comedy of Errors*, the characters to a certain extent follow the patterns determined by the source.

Another question: Is Shakespeare's inventiveness greater in characterization than it is in plot? Undoubtedly, Shakespeare follows his original more closely, as a rule, in plot and action than in characterization; whether we consider the dramas in which characterization is of primary importance, or those where situation comes first. He likes the audience to be familiar with the story, and chooses as his sources, works which were familiar to his contemporaries: a popular story book, a play already on the stage, a history, or whatnot.

Shakespeare follows his sources for plot in twenty-five of his thirty-seven plays; and his changes almost invariably are changes of characterization rather than of story. He may make the action more unified, the *dénouement* more logical, the story more dramatic, but he follows his main plot faithfully. In the remaining twelve plays, Shakespeare's changes in plot are more important. In *Macbeth* he employed, as is well known, incidents scat-

tered throughout Holinshed and made them a part of Macbeth's story; and in *Lear* he transformed the play into a tragedy and strengthened the story by the daring addition of a sub-plot, similar in theme to the main one.

If we omit from the discussion the following plays of doubtful authorship, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Pericles* (for the two latter, at least, there are sources which the dramatist follows for plot), and also *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest*, for which no satisfactory sources have come to light, there remain only four plays in which Shakespeare does not follow his source closely for plot. These are: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, for which there may have been a lost play which Shakespeare used rather than Montemayor's *Diana; The Merry Wives of Windsor*, for which Shakespeare changes his Italian source considerably; *The Merchant of Venice*, for which there was very probably an older play on the combined themes of the bond and the caskets; *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which there is no known source for the story of Benedick and Beatrice, and in which Shakespeare does not follow his Italian source very closely for the story of Hero and Claudio.

Shakespeare, of course, makes some changes in plot in all of his plays, but, in most cases, they are very slight ones, and practically every incident recounted in the drama can be found in the source. At times, he omits incidents unsuited to dramatic treatment, or changes the sequence of events, or throws a new light on certain situations, but more often the change is first in the characters, and the change in the action follows of necessity. For example, in *Measure for Measure*, Shakespeare dignifies in Isabella his original, the weak Cassandra, by bestowing on her the steadfast strength of character to sustain her splendid chastity; at the same time she loses nothing of her humanity of heart; as a result the action had to be adjusted to conform, as Isabella could not give herself to Angelo, as does her prototype to Promos, and remain a consistent character. In most cases, Shakespeare changes the personages first, and then the plot, if necessary. We found that Shakespeare owes less to his sources, in regard to characterization, in his later plays than in his early ones; such is not the case, as to his plots; for Shakespeare follows

his originals for action as closely in his later plays as in his earlier ones.

The next question has to do with Shakespeare's inventiveness in dialogue. A comparison of the language and style of Shakespeare's plays with those of their sources—both general and specific—shows that in practically every case Shakespeare owes little to his originals for dialogue. Although he accepts prototypes for a large number of his personages, he seldom takes their dialogue from the earlier work. Even when the source is an older play, Shakespeare takes little of the language from the original. There are two noteworthy exceptions to this rule; first, in his earliest works, Shakespeare was to some extent influenced in the kind of dialogue used by his personages, by the plays of his immediate predecessors in the drama; and, in the second place, when North's translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* is used as a direct source, Shakespeare is influenced often to a remarkable degree by the language of that splendid work. Illustrations of this latter are seen in a comparison of North's translation of Plutarch's account of Cleopatra's appearance when Antony first saw her, with Shakespeare's account as spoken by Enobarbus, and in Plutarch's account of the conversation following Cleopatra's death with Shakespeare's rendering of the same. In this second instance, North writes, "One of the soldiers seeing her [Charmian, attendant of Cleopatra], angrily said to her: 'Is that well done Charmian?' 'Very well,' said she again, 'and meete for a Princess descended from the race of so many noble kings.'"[3]

Shakespeare writes:

First guard: ". . . Charmian, is this well done?"
Charmian: "It is well done, and fitting for a Princess.
Descended of so many royal Kings."[4]

Shakespeare puts into blank verse the beautiful prose of North, using almost the very words; there is little attempt at improvement, as Shakespeare recognizes the beauty of North's

[3] T. North's "Plutarch," in J. P. Collier's "Shakespeare's Library," ed. by W. C. Hazlitt, part I, vol. III, p. 416.
[4] Act V, Scene ii.

language and retains it. As Raleigh aptly says, "In Plutarch Shakespeare met his match."

In general, however, Shakespeare is highly inventive with the dialogue of his personages; as he originates the language of his plays, and is equally inventive with the "grand style" of his serious drama, and the homely style of the comic parts.

We come finally to the question, Are Shakespeare's invented personages his greatest creations? And when we consider that this group includes the majority of his heroes and heroines, the great comic characters, the several kinds of moralizing figures, the interesting supernatural beings, there can be but one answer: Shakespeare's personages are great in proportion to the degree in which they are his own; whether they are completely invented or made his through significant changes from their prototypes. Taking into account only those personages who are entirely Shakespeare's, we have an impressive array: Beatrice, Benedick, Miranda, Falstaff, Dogberry, Shallow, Jaques, Autolycus, Ariel, and many others. But we must go farther; the greatest creations are not these personages, but those figures which Shakespeare made his own, though prototypes for them exist in earlier literature; such figures as Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Lady Macbeth, Iago, Mercutio, and many others. All of these personages are great because of Shakespeare's conception of them; in no case is their prototype a conspicuous or memorable figure. In general, Shakespeare invents when he feels that he can produce a more successful character than that found in his source, and also when his original fails to supply suggestions for the various kinds of figures which his dramatic instinct demands; and, as a result of this plan, his invented personages are not only numerous, but are the greatest of his creations. It is to be hoped that this fact is a justification of this study and that it has been shown that Shakespeare's genius as an inventor of personages, a creator of character, is equal to his genius as a dramatist, and as a poet.

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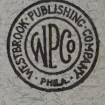
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